

**A STUDY OF AGRICULTURAL CHANGE
IN THE NTABAZINDUNA RESERVE
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE
COLONIAL PERIOD 1923 - 1939**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis delves into the agricultural past of the Ntabazinduna Reserve which is part of the Bubi District in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). The main purpose of this case study is to investigate whether or not there was a significant agricultural change in this Reserve, particularly in the colonial period 1923-1939.

The Ntabazinduna area was sparsely populated before 1918. After the First World War the African population and number of livestock increased rapidly in the Reserve because of new immigrants from the Insiza District and natural accession. Then, the African cultivators were often faced with serious problems of congestion, poor harvests and overstocking. Oral and written sources do not suggest that there was tension between the new immigrants and the local population.

In response to a general realisation that the Reserves generally were deteriorating alarmingly, the Colonial State intervened in the African agrarian sector between 1920 and 1939.

The White Settler Government's chief agents of change in this area were Alvord, the Agriculturalist for Natives, the NC of the Bubi District and a trained African Agricultural Demonstrator. These men went out to the Reserve where they carried out agricultural experiments in the inter-war period. It was hoped that after they had delivered lectures and conducted these experiments, then the African cultivators would abandon their old ways of farming and adopt new, scientific agricultural methods which were introduced into the Reserve by the Colonial State's agents of change. As African cultivators used these new agricultural techniques, it was assumed that they would probably be in a better position to grow

enough food for local consumption. In that way some of the above economic problems could be solved.

This dissertation attempts to measure the responses of the African cultivators to the agricultural experiments conducted by Alvord and the demonstrators in the Ntabazinduna Reserve. In addition, this case-study will make use of new oral evidence collected by certain individuals and submitted to the National Archives of Zimbabwe. This new material will be checked against published and unpublished sources or vice versa. Oral evidence which I collected from some elderly people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve between 1983 and 1988 will also be used to throw light on the subject of agricultural change.

This dissertation does not use the term peasant in a technical sense. The word is used here to include all African cultivators in the Ntabazinduna area.

Chapter 1 assesses African economic activities in the pre-Colonial and early Colonial era. Chapter 2 accounts for the growth of hostilities between the Ntabazinduna Reserve and neighbouring farms. The third chapter establishes the indifference of the BSA government to African agriculture; while Chapter 4 explains the more interventionist policies of 'Responsible Government' after 1923.

Chapters 5 and 6 outline Alvord's goals and methods and the work of the demonstrators. Chapter 7 assesses the response by African peasants to these activities.

The thesis concludes that there were only limited responses by the majority of Ntabazinduna Reserve peasant producers to Alvord's efforts.

The numbers of those who cooperated fully were very small, and they were drawn from a stratum of better-off families. Ndebele agriculture did not collapse as decisively in the inter-war years as the earlier 'underdevelopment' theorists believed. In the Ntabazinduna Reserve, the overall picture was one of survival by the majority, with clear-cut responses by a small minority.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN TEXT AND FOOTNOTING.

AED	African Education Department
ASA	African Studies Association
B.S.A.Co.	British South Africa Company
C	Command Papers
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
C.O.	Colonial Office
DND	Director of Native Development
DO(TB)	Deeds Office Tredgold Building in Bulawayo
NADA	Native Affairs Department Annual
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe in Harare
NC	Native Commissioner
S/N	Superintendent of Natives
SR	Southern Rhodesia
TTL	Tribal Trust Land

Former Name

New Name

Basutoland	Lesotho
Bechuanaland	Botswana
Essexvale	Esigodini
Gwelo	Gweru
Marandellas	Marondera
Ntabazinduna Mission	David Livingstone Memorial Mission
Salisbury	Harare
Southern Rhodesia	Zimbabwe
Tjolotjo	Tsholotsho

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INTRODUCTION

The land issue dominates Zimbabwe's colonial past as much as its present. A substantial body of literature, dealing with the subject of African agricultural history in Southern Rhodesia in the first half of the twentieth century has concentrated mainly on broad brush strokes. As a result, much of the published work is incapable of explaining variations in local situations. Several published works are studies too often characterised by half-truths and unwarranted over-generalisations based on inadequate oral and written data. Giovanni Arrighi, a member of the 'underdevelopment' school of thought concluded in his paper that there was a "progressive decrease in the overall productivity" of the African peasantry in Southern Rhodesia.¹ It could also be argued that Robin Palmer, also influenced by underdevelopment theories, argued too bluntly when he declared that by the end of the 1930's the "agricultural economy of the Shona and of the Ndebele, like that of the Kikuyu and most South African people had been destroyed".² Such findings have been criticised by Ranger (among others) as "overmelodramatic in bringing down the curtain in the 1930's", and for failing to recognize the "resurrection' that took place between the 1930's and the 1970's.³ Arrighi and Palmer overstate the "destruction" of African peasant production.

1. G Arrighi, The Political Economy of Rhodesia (The Hague: Mouton & Co N.V. Publishers, 1967), P.32: cf. Paul Mosley, The Settler Economies: Studies in the Economic History of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia 1900 - 1963 (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1983) p. 71.
2. R Palmer, Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia (London: Heineman, 1977) p. 241.
3. T Ranger, 'Growing from the Roots: Reflections on Peasant Research in Central and Southern Africa', Journal of Southern African Studies, 5 (1978), pp. 119, 120.

Paul Mosley criticised their, and similar, conclusions on the grounds that they were based on inadequate, statistical data: "Writers of the underdevelopment school have consistently maintained that in settler economies (i.e. economies to which colonists came to produce as well as administer, with the result that a significant amount of land had to be alienated for their own use) indigenous agriculture was in every case severely damaged by repressive policies designed to ensure the economic survival of European producers."⁴

In his view there are two groups of scholars who have made overstatements in connection with the history of African peasant economy in Southern Rhodesia during the first half of the twentieth century. One of the groups consisted of 'apologists for colonialism'. According to these scholars the introduction of foreign capital stimulated the indigenous economy. The other group is that of the 'underdevelopment school' that rejected the apologists' interpretation of the African peasant economy. According to these theorists, capitalist policies destroyed African agriculture.⁵

But Mosley's findings argue that the "truth is more complex than either of these simple interpretations".⁶ On one hand he alleges that most white producers needed African cheap labour, cattle and maize so much that they did not want to destroy the peasant economy that sustained them. On the other, African production "proved surprisingly resilient to

4. P Mosley, 'Agricultural Development and Government Policy in Settler Economies: The Case of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1900 - 60' Economic History Review, 35, (1982) p 390.

5. P. Mosley, The Settler Economies: Studies in the Economic History of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia 1900 - 1963, from the blurb.

6. Ibid.

the strains put upon it".⁷ Table 3.1 in his book shows estimates of total production of maize, millet, wheat, groundnuts, rice and cattle during the colonial period.⁸ This statistical evidence helps to shed light on developments that took place in the African agricultural economy during the colonial days. By his new interpretation, reinforced by statistical evidence, he has made a great contribution to the study of the history of the peasant economy in Africa. His conclusions, unlike those of the above scholars, are convincing.

A further response to the sweeping and linear judgments of some of the scholarship of the 1960's and 1970's, has been an academic acceptance of the need for case-studies in Zimbabwe today. These will permit the making of comparisons that could throw more light on the question of agricultural change in the African Reserves in Southern Rhodesia in the first forty years of the twentieth century.

One of the pioneers in this field of study is Terence Ranger. He acknowledged the fact that few local historical studies had been conducted in Southern Rhodesia. Instead of dealing with the agricultural history of Southern Rhodesia as a whole, he concentrated on one colonial administrative district called Makoni, a part of Mashonaland. In that way he demonstrated clearly that a small area could easily be used as a unit for field research. He stressed that the agricultural history of Makoni district offered chances of comparisons with studies in other

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid, pp. 71 - 72.

parts of Southern Rhodesia.⁹ Furthermore, he established the kind of relationship the Makoni peasants had with the State, white settler-farmers and landlords during the colonial era.

Another pioneer in the field of local study is Zachrisson. The main purpose of his detailed study of the Belingwe District was to assess the responses of the Africans of Belingwe to the agents and factors of change.¹⁰ This work established that factors of change in studies of colonial society in Rhodesia were town, mission and farm.¹¹ A few educated Africans were regarded as agents of change. The majority of the Africans who were illiterate were taken as agents of response.¹² Using archival material, missionary records and local written materials he established that it was possible for scholars to follow interactions between the Administration, the mission and Africans.¹³ These new lines of approach drawn up by Zachrisson, Ranger and other scholars show a more complex picture of the history of African peasant economy than that which Palmer and others originally outlined. Undoubtedly, the above scholars have made a great contribution to the study of the agricultural history of African peasant societies. But most of these case studies have focused their attention on rural, economic development in

9. Conference on Zimbabwean History: Progress and Development: 'Approaching Zimbabwe's Colonial History through a District study' by Terence Ranger, Manchester. April, 1981, pp. 1 - 2; T Ranger, Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985) pp. ix, x, chapters 1 and 2.

10. P Zachrisson, 'An African area in change: Belingwe 1894 - 1946', Bulletin of Department of History No. 17, University of Gothenburg, 1978, p. 3.

11. Ibid, p. 4.

12. Ibid, pp. 4 - 6.

13. Ibid, p. 6.

Mashonaland during the colonial period. It could be argued that the totality of Southern Rhodesia's African agricultural past might be understood better if scholars made a great effort to trace economic development in every reserve, and this study is a contribution towards such district-based enquiry.

In the Bubi District, a part of Matabeleland, there are three African Reserves. The biggest of the three is the Shangani Reserve with an area of 1 126 000 acres. It was established for the Ndebele tribe in 1894. The smallest of them all is the Inyathi Reserve whose area is 7 090 acres.¹⁴ The third tribal trustland with an area of 26 220 acres was named after a small mountain where it is thought that several Ndebele chiefs including Gundwane Ndiweni were executed by Mzilikazi Khumalo.¹⁵ According to oral and a few written sources, these chiefs were killed on the grounds that they tried to instal Nkulumane Khumalo as the King of the Ndebele when his father was still alive. As a result the area around this mountain was called Ntabazinduna.¹⁶ The compound noun iNtabazinduna is the short form of the term Intabavezinduna, meaning the "mountain of chiefs".

Every scholar, delving into the history of African agricultural economy in Southern Rhodesia, would undoubtedly be faced with the problem of

14. E D Alvord, Department of Native Development, Southern Rhodesia, Occasional Paper No. 3 November 1930 'Agricultural Status of Reserve Natives,' Table No. 1.
15. Ibid., Table No. 1. Titus Hlazo, 'The Naming of the Hill, Intaba Yezinduna, Matabeleland.' NADA The Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department Annual, 1934 No. 12 pp. 72 - 74.
16. Ibid., pp. 72 - 73, See also T J Hemans, Notes for a Course on Ndebele Customs, p. 3. (Salisbury: Government Printer) p. 3 This source is undated.



INTABAYEZINDUNA FROM THE EAST, WITH NTANYAZANA (MAXIM HILL) IN THE FOREGROUND.

Source: Mhlagazanhansi (Jones, N.), My Friend Khumato.

inadequate, empirical evidence to support his assertions. In a review article surveying work of the 1970's, Terence Ranger wrote, "In almost all African peasant historiography ... none of the authors makes any use of field work or oral material".¹⁷ And indeed, many scholars who have done research on African peasant agricultural history have relied heavily on written archival data. But, of course, these archival collections contain their own biases and silences. For instance, in the reports of the white farmers' associations, Africans were often referred to as 'drunkards, thieves and natives'. These and other terms show clearly the prevailing racial stereotypes with which European farmers used to look down upon Africans during the Colonial period. It was not true that all Shona and Ndebele were thieves in the first half of the twentieth century. Racial prejudice was a strong force at work. Obviously, these farmers wanted to win Government support against the Africans whose lands were taken over by the white settlers. Similarly, European missionaries who did not understand the African culture fully also made sweeping judgments with regards to traditional customs. For instance, when Africans worshiped their ancestral spirits, missionaries called them heathen who were possessed by evil spirits. And, finally, many administrative reports and documents convey the preferences and prejudices (both conscious and unconscious) of the "official mind".

Reinforcing the hypothesis that scholars who base their works on written material only might arrive at wrong conclusions, Terence Ranger declared, "A book so dependent upon access to formal archival collections is very likely to bring its story of peasant collapse and

17. Terence Ranger, 'Growing from the Roots: Reflections on Peasant Research in Central and Southern Africa', Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 5. No. 1. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, October, 1978) p. 99.

decline to a close in the 1930's, when archival access comes to an end."¹⁸

Wherever possible, scholars ought to check written evidence against oral data and vice versa. This case-study will use the above technique in order to minimize the selectivity and maximise the reliability of both oral and written data. Its main archival base will consist of: reports, returns and correspondence by colonial officials (especially the Chief Native Commissioner, Bubi District Commissioners, and the Agriculturalist for the Instruction of Natives), reports and letters by missionaries and other prominent personalities.

In addition to that it will make use of new oral material collected by certain individuals and submitted to the Zimbabwe National archives a few years ago. A distinction needs to be made between a view of oral evidence as essentially recording the past of an elite, and a more broadly-based assessment of its value. H W Langworthy exemplifies the former position: "The greatest detail of history is remembered by only those few people who have positions of power and prestige in a traditional society, such as chiefs, traditional councillors, keepers of royal graves and relics, and their families."¹⁹ But such a conclusion is open to question. It equates power with memory in an arbitrary manner. It could be argued that apart from the members of the above classes there might be old people with retentive minds and valuable information. For instance, a descendant of a slave might be in a better

18. Ibid., p. 107. See also H W Langworthy, Zambia Before 1890: Aspects of Pre-Colonial History (London: Longman Group Limited, 1974) p. (v).

19. Ibid., p. 3.

position to tell the interviewer how his grandparents worked for their master. As this dissertation will show, there is valuable historical information provided by representatives of almost all the classes of people living in the Ntabazinduna Reserve.

The first Chapter will give an account of the economic activities of the Africans in Ntabazinduna during the pre-colonial period. It will also focus its attention on changes in the physical environment affected by the people in the years 1897 - 1925. In the second chapter the relations between the Ntabazinduna Reserve and the neighbouring, white commercial farms in the periods 1897 - 1923 and 1924 - 1939 will be analysed. The third chapter will examine the attitude of the wielders of political power towards the African rural population in the period 1897 - 1923. The fourth chapter analyses the Responsible Government's policy towards the African areas with particular reference to the Ntabazinduna Reserve between 1923 and 1939. The purpose of the fifth chapter is to outline the aims and the economic activities of E D Alvord, the man who demonstrated his great determination to bring about a meaningful, agricultural change in the Ntabazinduna area and other African reserves between the two World Wars. The sixth chapter concentrates on the African demonstrators' agricultural experiments in the above Reserve in the years 1927 - 1939. The last chapter assesses the responses of the African peasant farmers to the economic activities of the Agriculturalist, the demonstrators and the other agents of agricultural change in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the inter-war period.

CHAPTER 1

THE AFRICAN PEASANT FARMERS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

In the nineteenth century Mzilikazi Khumalo, an ex-induna of Shaka Zulu established the Ndebele state between the Limpopo and the Zambezi Rivers. The Kingdom consisted of several districts. In the introduction of his thesis, Robin Palmer says, "The (Ndebele) state was divided into four or five districts, each containing large military Kraals."¹ Earlier, Peter Mahlangu - on the basis of interviews with elderly people in Matebeleland - maintained that the Ndebele Kingdom consisted of four big districts, whose names were Amnyama, Igabha, Amhlope and Amakhanda.²

According to him the above districts were run by the Chief indunas, Majijili Gwebu, Maqhekeni Sithole, Gwabalanda Mathe and Dlundluluza Dlodlo respectively.³ Mahlangu's conclusions concur with those of Maund. Writing about the affairs of the Transvaal and adjacent territories, Maund said, "The country (Matebeleland) is divided into four divisions. These divisions constitute the four great territorial divisions of the army."⁴

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1. R H Palmer, 'The Making and Implementation of Land Policy in Rhodesia, 1890 - 1936', University of London, published as: PhD Thesis, 1968, p. 13.
 2. P S Mahlangu, UMthwakazi : Izindaba ZamaNdebele Zemvelo (Cape Town: Longmans Southern Africa Pvt. Limited, 1962) pp. 23 - 27.
 3. Ibid., pp 25 and 27.
 4. C 4643: Maund, 'Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of the Transvaal and Adjacent Territories', (London, Feb. 1886) by Eyre and Spottiswoode; p. 114.

Demonstrating the value of oral evidence, Peter Mahlangu named the military stations that were established in the four major districts by Mzilikazi in the second quarter of the twentieth century. In addition to that he outlined the names of those military stations which were inherited by Lobhengula, the last King of the Ndebele.⁵ Cobbing, who has made a great contribution to the study of the rise and fall of the Ndebele state confirmed the existence of the above major districts and military stations mentioned by Mahlangu.⁶

According to one informant ENSingweni, which is now called Nhlambabaloyi, Wizard's pool, in the Ntabazinduna Reserve, was one of the military posts established in the district called Amnyama.⁷ But Mahlangu's book placed this military station in the area called Amakhanda, which was under the chief induna, Dlundluluza Dlodlo who was succeeded by Somabhulane, his son.⁸ Furthermore, the same informant alleged that ENSingweni was dismantled by the British South Africa Company's armed forces during the Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893 - 1894. According to him all the Africans living in the Ntabazinduna area were ordered to leave for the district of Amakhanda (Fort Rixon) by the Colonial Government.⁹ But there is no written, archival data that throws more light on the above conclusions.

5. Mahlangu, UMthwakazi, pp. 25, 27, 28.

6. J R D Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos, 1820 - 1896' University of Lancaster, unpub. PhD thesis, January, 1976, pp. 3, 60 - 77, 102.

7. M Nyathi was interviewed at Bhekeni Line, Ntabazinduna Reserve on 7 January 1985. See also NAZ, NB 3 /1/9 Chief Native Commissioner Matabeleland-General Correspondence. Campbell to CNC, Sept 1908 p. 77.

8. Mahlangu, UMthwakazi, p. 25.

9. Nyathi interviewed on 7 January 1985.

An alternative sequence was suggested by another informant: that there was a period when the Ntabazinduna region was not occupied by people. He alleged that this vacated area was re-occupied by some Zulu people who accompanied the British South Africa Company to Southern Rhodesia at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ This might have happened after the military post, ENSingweni had been dismantled by the Colonial Government.

In his view the Ntabazinduna region was too dry to be inhabited by human beings; as a result the Zulu group returned to South Africa. There is neither oral nor written evidence that throws more light on this story.

The same informant went on to say that his grandfather, the Commander-in-Chief of the Imbizo Regiment, Lobhengula's crack force, tried to settle in the area.¹¹ Like the Zulu group this man and his relatives were said to have found the place too dry to be occupied by people with their livestock. For this reason these Ndebele settled in an area opposite to the Ntabazinduna Reserve before 1902.

Although there are puzzling discrepancies as to the occupancy of the area before 1896, it is clear that by 1902 Thambo Ndiweni was the chief of the Ntabazinduna Reserve.¹²

10. A M Khumalo, the Vice President of National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe was interviewed at his home in the Ntabazinduna Reserve on 27 February 1984.

11. Ibid. The above informant's grandfather, Mtshana Khumalo was the Commander-in-Chief of the Imbizo Regiment. See also N Macglashan, Report by Mining Commissioner for the financial year ending on 31 March 1898, p. 213.

12. NAZ, NB 3 /1/9 Campbell to CNC Sept. 1908, p. 77, M. Nyathi, 7 Jan. 1985; A.M. Khumalo, 27 Feb. 1984.

In his book P S Mahlangu listed the names of the Chiefs of the Ntabazinduna Reserve from 1900 to 1939. These men were Thambo, Mhlambezi, Mkhulunyelwa, Mhanqwa and Khayisa. All these people were members of the Ndiweni clan.¹³ It is an oddity that he did not mention Mhanqwa's son and successor, Bhuloho Ndiweni, the Chief who played a significant role in the development of the history of the Ntabazinduna Reserve as from 1922.¹⁴

In his thesis Samkange emphasized that it was British Imperial Government's policy to reserve land suitable for the needs of the African population in Southern Rhodesia.¹⁵ This policy was formulated in response to the African uprising of 1896-1897 because so much land had already passed into European hands, and to restrain the Chartered Company during the early period of "speculation and violence". This conclusion seemed to have been based on Article 81 of the Southern Rhodesia Order-in-Council of 1898 which provided that, "The Company (British South Africa Company) shall from time to time assign to the natives inhabiting Southern Rhodesia land sufficient for their occupation, whether as tribes or portions of tribes, and suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements, including in all cases a

13. Mahlangu, UMthwakazi, p. 27. See also NAZ, NB 3 /1/9 Campbell to CNC Sept. 1908, pp 66 - 77.

14. NAZ, S 138/72 Agricultural Activities within the Department of Development. Agriculturalist writing to the Chief Native Commissioner 22 August 1930, p. 1; E D Alvord to the Director of Native Education Salisbury, 30 May 1929; NAZ, S 1561/10 'Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi', Report by the Native Commissioner, p. 1.

15. S Samkange, 'The Establishment of African Reserves in Matabeleland 1893 - 1898', Michigan, unpub. PhD thesis, 1968, p. 204.

fair equitable proportion of springs or permanent water."¹⁶ In the light of this consideration it could be argued that the wielders of political power were trying to implement imperial policy when they established the Gwaai and the Shangani Reserves after the Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893 - 1894. According to the Land Commission's report the Shangani area was "a magnificent country abounding in game and having plenty of wood and water".¹⁷ But oral testimony and other written evidence concur that the banks of the Gwaai and Shangani Rivers were not suitable for the Africans' needs on the grounds that they were sandy and dry.¹⁸

Samkange emphasises the ungenerous quality of reserve land allocations "In practice Africans were given leftovers which had been unclaimed by white men."¹⁹ He also argued that "If these (leftovers) were good it was more by accident than by design."²⁰ In agreement with Samkange's conclusion, Palmer, who has given a detailed account of the land issue in Colonial Southern Rhodesia, emphasized in his thesis that it was "strange that not even one European was interested in the best grazing veldt in Matabeleland."²¹

16. NAZ, C. O., African (South) No. 1069: 'Position of the Natives in the Reserves in Southern Rhodesia', Memorandum April 1919, p. 1.

17. The Bulawayo Chronicle, November 2 1894, p. 3.

18. Chief K Ndiweni of the Ntabazinduna Reserve was interviewed at his home on 18 December 1983. R H Palmer, 'The Making and implementation of Land Policy in Rhodesia 1890-1936, University of London, PhD thesis, 1968, p. 83. M C Steele', 'The Foundations of a Native Policy: Southern Rhodesia 1923-1933', Simon Fraser University, unpub, PhD thesis, 1972, p. 8.
NAZ, N 3 /16/9 Land: Purchased by Natives 1914-1923 S/N Bulawayo to CNC 1 June, 1920, p.7.

19. Samkange, PhD thesis, p. 207.

20. Ibid. p. 36.

21. R H Palmer, PhD thesis, 1968, p. 50.

Samkange and Palmer demonstrate that the banks of the Gwaai, Nata and Shangani Rivers were not at all conducive to human settlement. The Land Commission's report on these areas should not be taken seriously. It could be argued that this report was rather erratic. Those who compiled it were not so much interested in the welfare and fate of the Africans living on the banks of these rivers, as in serving the interests of the B.S.A.Co. and the white settlers who advocated the implementation of the policy of territorial separation of the two races after the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893 - 94.

According to Palmer, certain portions of Southern Rhodesia could not be set aside for African occupation. These areas included the Gold Belt, land alienated to Europeans, places near existing or projected railway lines and regions that could easily be defended during African revolt.²²

The creation of additional reserves in Matabeleland by wielders of political power before the turn of the nineteenth century confirms that the economic resources of the Gwaai and Shangani regions could not support the African people and their livestock. One of the new areas set aside for African occupation was the Ntabazinduna Reserve, surrounded by several landed properties.

It was bounded to the north by the speculative landed properties "Annalay and Gravesend" owned originally by the Whites Consolidated Company Limited and J W Colenbranders' Matabeleland Development Company

22. R Palmer and N Parsons, (ed), The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa, (London: Heinemann, 1983) pp. 235 - 237.

Limited respectively.²³

On the east the Ntabazinduna Reserve was bounded by the Battlefield Block.²⁴ The original owner of this land was the White Consolidated Company Limited. Then, it was bought by the B.S.A.Co. and a portion of it was given to the amaMfengu who were recruited by Cecil John Rhodes.²⁵ According to Father Nyilika the Battlefield Block or Fingo Location was subdivided into 77 plots of 11 acres each and given to 77 men who came from Transkei in 1900.²⁶ One informant also confirmed that the amaMfengu came from the Cape Colony and were given this land by Rhodes, the Chairman of the B.S.A.Co..²⁷

On the west of the Reserve there were three landed properties namely Induba, Maldon and the Imbesu Block owned originally by Colenbrander's Matabeleland Company Limited, Matabeleland Gold Reefs Estates Company Limited and Crescens Matabeleland Mines and Land Company Limited respectively.²⁸ To the south of the Ntabazinduna area there was a Government farm which was called Outspan No. 3.²⁹ Bounded as it was by

23. DO(TB), Folio 275 Annalay, Reg. No. 2906, 3 September 1895; DO(TB), D D A 38/69 "Gravesend DO(RB)", B 1774 Folio, 3 September 1901.

24. Father Nyilika, 'Mbembesi', The Parish Magazine; Focus, St Margaret's Church, North End, Bulawayo, January 1985, p. 7.

25. NAZ, S 1087 /6 Register of B.S.A.Co.'s Farms, p 186.

26. Father Nyilika, The Parish Magazine: Focus, p. 7.

27. O. Somkence interviewed at the Fingo Location, Bembesi on 13 July 1985. His father came from the Cape Colony in 1900.

28. NAZ, L 2/2/117/10 Native Reserves 1898 - 1909: Secretary to Survey-General to the Chief Secretary, Salisbury, 29 December 1909, pp. 1 - 3.

29. Ibid. pp 1 - 3.

Private property, there was no room for expansion of the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the years 1897 - 1939.

The Ntabazinduna Reserve is a part of the highveld whose height above sea level is 4 000 feet to 6 000 feet.³⁰ The axis of the uplift forms the watershed from which rivers run north-westwards to the Zambezi and south-eastward to the Limpopo and Sabi valleys. One of these rivers with its tributaries dissects the northern part of the Ntabazinduna Reserve. This is the Ngwenya River which flows across the Battlefield Block and forms a part of the drainage system running north-westward.³¹ This river was a blessing to the people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve and the Battlefield Block. It supplied them with water for domestic and pastoral purposes.

The Mbembesi River, lying due north-east of David Livingstone Memorial Mission was a further source of water for people and their livestock.³² To the west of this mission station there is the Magotsha River, draining into the Imbesu Block. The Kenyani and the Mankabi Rivers which are a few kilometres due northwest of the mission station drain into the farm 'Gravesend'.³³

30. Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Southern Rhodesia : Handbook for the use of Prospective Settler on the Land (Cape Town : The Rhodesian Chartered Agency, 1935) pp. 1 - 3. The lowest point where the Limpopo River leaves Southern Rhodesia is 660 feet above sea level. Inyangani Mountain with altitude of 8250 feet above sea level is the highest point in Zimbabwe.
31. M Macpherson, (ed.) Life and Labours of Rev. J B Radasi: Missionary in Southern Rhodesia (Gisborne: The Gisborne Herald Co. Ltd., 1966) p. 91; Nyilika, The Parish Magazine, Focus, p. 7.
32. Nyilika, The Parish Magazine: Focus p. 7; O. Somkence, 13 July 1985.
33. See an attached sketch map, showing the drainage system in the Ntabazinduna Reserve between pp 121 and 122 of this dissertation.

These rivers and streams also helped to influence the pattern of the distribution of the African population and their fields in the Ntabazinduna area in the first half of the twentieth century. For instance, according to one informant, the early African peasant farmers built their homesteads on the banks of rivers because the soil was frequently more fertile there than in other parts of the Ntabazinduna Reserve.³⁴ He also pointed out that the majority of the African people lived there because they always wanted to be near sources of water and their fields.³⁵ This implies that those areas which were far away from streams and rivers were thinly populated particularly before boreholes were sunk and dams were built by the Colonial Government.

In the pre-colonial period the entire right to the land in Matabeleland was vested in the King.³⁶ The King gave his subjects either collectively or individually the right to live on and cultivate various parts of it. When the land was given to the community as a whole by the King, the Chief divided it up among his headmen.³⁷ The headmen distributed the land to kraalheads and commoners.³⁸ According to African custom land could not be bought or sold by an individual.

34. Khumalo interviewed, 27 February 1984; See also NAZ, N 24/1/2 Vol. 2 Report on Native Reserves, May. 1913, p.2.

35. Khumalo, 27 February 1984.

36. T J Hemans, Notes For a Course on Ndebele Customs, p. 45; Ndiweni interviewed, 18 December 1983.

37. Hemans, Notes for a Course on Ndebele Customs, pp. 45 - 46: See also NAZ, Oral/HO3 H R G Howman, a member of the Native Department was interviewed by M C Steele in Salisbury on 10, 26 August 1971, pp. 47 48.

38. M G Reid, 'The Early Agriculture of Matabeleland and Mashonaland', Rhodesia Agricultural Journal, vol. 73/74 (1976/77), p. 97; Hemans, Notes For A Course On Ndebele Customs, pp. 45 - 46.

The Ndebele, like the other Africans, practiced shifting cultivation. In the majority of cases the land was often worked for three or four years; after that it was left to lie fallow. This abandoned land was called ifusi and the original cultivator still kept his right over it.³⁹ He lost this right when he shifted the kraal from this area to another place. These practices are reported in oral interviews as well as in the written records.⁴⁰

Both oral and written sources concur that for the Ndebele like the Shona the division of labour was on gender lines.⁴¹ For instance it was men's duty to clear the land. Bushes and trees were usually cut down by men who used axes, amahloka. Bush fencing was also done by men. Women with short-handled iron hoes broke the ground.⁴² According to one written source seeds were struck into the ground by women.⁴³ But other written and oral sources maintain that both men and women used to broadcast seeds in their gardens, ezivandeni or fields, emasimini whose areas varied from one to six acres.⁴⁴ When the seeds germinated, women were expected to weed. The crops they grew in 1890 - 1929 were mainly

39. Reid, pp. 97 - 101.

40. M. Nyithi, K. Ndiweni, A.M. Khumalo.

41. Ibid., p. 98, NAZ, S 1561/10 'Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi, 22 June 1925' pp. 1 - 3; Elizabeth Schmidt, 'Women, Agriculture and Social Change in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 - 1934, with special reference to the Goromonzi District'. University of Zimbabwe, May 1986, pp. 6 - 7. Seminar Paper.

42. MaMthethwa, an elderly woman was interviewed near the Ngwenya River on 19 August 1984; F Tshuma was interviewed in Bulawayo on 25 May 1987.

43. Reid, 'The Early Agriculture of Matabeleland and Mashonaland,' p. 98.

44. Ibid. p. 98 Nyathi and Ndiweni interviewed at their homes, 7 January 1985 and 18 December 1983 respectively.

inyawuti, sorghum, amabele, millet, uphoko, finger-millet; amazambane, peanuts; indumba, beans; amakhabe, watermelons; amajodo, melons; amathanga, pumpkins; and umumbu, maize. But their staple crop was "kaffir corn", or millet, amabele.⁴⁵ These crops were harvested, collected and threshed by beating with sticks on flat rocks, amadwala. Then women's other task was ukwela winnowing by shaking grain from baskets. All the trash was blown away by wind. Then, the good grain was collected and kept in izilulu, grass baskets or iziphala, grain huts. When there was a surplus of grain, it was usually stored in pits dug in the cattle kraal, lining them with mud and sealing them in.⁴⁶ It is clear that women played a significant role in the development of the history of African agriculture.

Oral and written sources indicate that the majority of the inhabitants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve did not grow enough food to eat, particularly in the 1920's.⁴⁷ One of the causes of poor harvests particularly in the Ntabazinduna Reserve was scarcity of rainfall. In his handbook the Minister of Agriculture and Lands stated that the mean annual rainfall over Southern Rhodesia was 28.3 inches during the colonial period 1923 - 1939.⁴⁸ An area with a rainfall of 25 inches or

45. Reid, p. 98; Report of the Native Commissioner, Matabeleland, March 1904, p. 3.

46. Ngele Nyathi who was born in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in 1916 was interviewed at his home on 25 December 1985.

47. Ibid., See also The Bulawayo Native Mirror : Chiringiriro : Isibuko 25 December 1931, p. 9; Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District For the Year Ended 31 December 1923, pp. 243 - 244; NAZ, S 235/504 District Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1926, p. 3.

48. Bulawayo Experiment Station; Annual Report for the Year 1925 - 1926 by H W Hilliard, Assistant Agriculturalist, p. 286; Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Southern Rhodesia; Handbook for the use of Prospective Settlers on Land, p. 9.

over was regarded as a region which was "ordinarily free from serious droughts".⁴⁹ The Bubi District was included in Zone A whose mean annual rainfall was 25.2 inches.⁵⁰ Since the Ntabazinduna Reserve was a part of this district it could be assumed that it was supposed to be free from severe droughts. But this was not always the case with the Ntabazinduna area or other parts of the Bubi District. For instance as early as 1905 one missionary stationed at Ingwenya Mission stated in his letters that there had been a severe drought in the Ntabazinduna Reserve for ten months.⁵¹ Supporting this conclusion an informant said that this drought was followed by poor harvest in the area.⁵² Again in his annual report the Assistant Agriculturalist pointed out that the mean rainfall in the Bubi District for the period 1921 - 1924 was 14.5 inches.⁵³ This implies that the amount of rainfall in the above period was 10.7 inches below the expected mean annual rainfall in areas falling under Zone A.

But the shortage of rainfall was not the only factor which led to a low agricultural production in the Ntabazinduna Reserve and other African areas. In Hunter's view, increased agricultural output depends to a very large degree, on "more intensive and efficient use of land and water".⁵⁴

49. Minister of Agriculture and Lands, p. 9.

50. Ibid., p. 9 See also Meteorological Report for the Year ended 30 June 1929, p. 16. In this report the normal rainfall for the Bubi District was 23.32 inches.

51. Macpherson, Life and Labours of Rev. J B Radasi : Missionary in Southern Rhodesia, pp. 18 - 20.

52. M Nyathi, 7 January 1985.

53. Hilliard, Bulawayo Experiment Station : Annual Report for the year 1925 - 1926, p. 286.

54. G. Hunter, et al, Policy and Practice in Rural Development (London : Croom Helm, 1976) p. 18.

Accounting for low agricultural production in African reserves in both Mashonaland and Matabeleland, E D Alvord declared, "On the most fertile soils Native crops are much lower than they should be, because of poor tillage, planting in mixture, too thick planting, lack of cultivation, overcrowding with weeds."⁵⁵ He went on to say that the failure of the Africans to use new, agricultural methods resulted in under-sized, slender plants which produced "small grain heads or none at all".⁵⁶ The majority of the Africans living in the Bubi District did not sow seeds in rows before the arrival of the Demonstrator in the Ntabazinduna Area. They used traditional agricultural methods. It was alleged that these peasant farmers used to broadcast their seeds as late as 1926.⁵⁷ When the seeds germinated the young plants were often overcrowded. It became difficult for the African people to weed and cultivate the soil. Sources make it obvious that as long as the African peasant farmers found out that there were no weeds in their fields they did not cultivate the soil.⁵⁸ As a result, lack of cultivation retarded the rapid growth of their crops and led to poor harvests in the Ntabazinduna Reserve and other African areas.

55. E D Alvord, Department of Native Development, Southern Rhodesia, Occasional Paper No. 3 November 1930, 'Agricultural Demonstration Work on Reserves', p. 6.

56. Ibid., p. 6.

57. A.M. Khumalo, M. Nyathi, MaMthethwa interviewed on 27 February 1984, 7 January 1985, 19 August 1984 respectively.

58. NAZ, S 1561/10 'Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi, 22 June 1925'; NAZ, AOH/41 Chibvongodze interviewed at Farm No. 4 Muda Purchase Area by Dawson Munjeri on 14 July 1978, pp. 17 - 22; Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District for the year ending 31 December 1923 pp. 243 - 244; NAZ, S 235/503 N C's Annual Report for 1925, p. 3.

Apart from agriculture another main branch of African economy was pastoral farming. According to the Report of the British South Africa Company for the period 1892 - 1894 that Matabeleland was good for cattle was proved by the large herds which were owned by King Lobhengula.⁵⁹ However, this report did not state the number of cattle Lobhengula had.

In his thesis Cobbing says that the Ndebele cattle numbers ranged from 130 000 to 280 000 before 1893. This statistical evidence suggests that scholars do not know the exact number of cattle owned by the Ndebele during the reign of Lobhengula.⁶⁰ E.A. Nobbs argued that the earliest visitors to the Ndebele made false reports when they alleged that the whole of Matabeleland was teeming with cattle.⁶¹ In his view traders and missionaries were frequently detained at those places where cattle were chiefly concentrated, around Bulawayo, Inyathi, Umzingwane and at other cattle posts of the King, Lobhengula.⁶² He went on to say that it was doubtful whether there were cattle in the other parts of Matabeleland.⁶³ His argument carries much weight on the grounds that the other parts of the country were often theatres of military operations before 1894, and many cattle could not be reared in areas of conflict.

59. H Weinmann, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1890 - 1923 (Salisbury : University of Rhodesia, 1972) p. 104.

60. J R D Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos, 1820 - 1896.' University of Lancaster, unpub. PhD thesis, 1976, p. 9.

61. E.A. Nobbs, 'The Native Cattle of Southern Rhodesia' South African Journal of Science vol XXIV, Dec 1927, p 331.

62. Ibid p.331

63. Ibid p. 331

Nobbs also stated that 'official' estimates at the time of European occupation put the number of Ndebele cattle at half a million.⁶⁴ He alleged that this large number was reduced to 250,00 by rinderpest between 1896 and 1898.⁶⁵ The Administrator of Southern Rhodesia seemed to confirm the above figure when he stated in his report that Africans in Matabeleland had 43 850 cattle, 48 600 sheep and 171 000 goats by 1901.⁶⁶

But the Administrator's report and the article written by Nobbs did not mention the fact that the B.S.A.Co. confiscated many Ndebele cattle soon after the downfall of Lobhengula. Phimister, summarising the findings of older and more recent scholarships, argues that the number of Ndebele cattle confiscated by armed Europeans ranged from 100 000 to 200 000 in the years 1893 - 1896.⁶⁷ Clearly, the number of Ndebele cattle was not only reduced by rinderpest, but also by the B.S.A.Co.'s armed men who seized many beasts.

However, it is evident that the exact number of the cattle owned by Lobhengula or his subjects towards the end of the pre-colonial era is not known by scholars. Most of the figures in connection with Ndebele cattle are estimates (Nobbs also pointed out that the king and his subjects were not always prepared in principle to allow white strangers to count the Ndebele cattle). Chiefs, headmen and men who demonstrated

64. Ibid. p. 331.

65. Ibid p. 331

66. Report of the Administrator, Matabeleland, 1908 - 1909, p. 30. Sir William Milton was the Administrator.

67. I. Phimister, An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890 - 1948: Capital accumulation and class struggle (London: Longman, 1988) p.16.

their valour in the battlefield were often given cattle by the King for their distinguished military service.⁶⁸ As a result the above classes had more cattle than commoners. But according to Weinmann, all African cattle in Matabeleland were, theoretically the property of the King before 1893.⁶⁹

After the defeat of the Ndebele the Matabeleland Order-in-Council provided that: "The ownership of all cattle in the possession of natives in Matabeleland on or before 31 December 1893, as well as its offspring, was vested in the Company".⁷⁰ In that way most of the African cattle passed into the hands of the white settlers. Rinderpest also killed a good number of the remaining cattle.

When the Ntabazinduna Reserve was established, one report stated that there were only 25 cattle.⁷¹ But by 1913 the Native Commissioner in charge of the Bubi District said that there were 1 000 cattle and 1 500 head of small stock in the Ntabazinduna Reserve.⁷² The increase in the number of livestock was due to natural accession and immigration. In 1913, the Native Commissioner reported that Ntabazinduna Reserve could no longer carry any additional livestock by 1914. He mentioned that 3 000 acres of this place was rendered valueless on the grounds that it

68. M, Nqamakazi and M Nyathi of Ntabazinduna Reserve interviewed in June 1984 and January 1985.

69. Weinmann, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1890 - 1923, p. 104.

70. Ibid, p. 104.

71. NAZ, L 2/2/117/10 - Undated source p. 1; M Nyathi alleged that there was a time when the Ntabazinduna Reserve was inhabited by his grandfather Mgobo and family only. This period was 1894 - 97. Perhaps Mgobo had 25 cattle as stated by the above source.

72. NAZ, N 24/1/2, Report on Native Reserves, May 1913, p. 2.

consisted of hills and stony ground, which could not be brought under cultivation.⁷³ There is conflicting evidence as to the exact size of the Reserve, with estimates ranging from 22 000 to 26 220 acres.⁷⁴

In one of his reports E D Alvord mentioned that there were 2 900 cattle, 2 900 goats, 990 sheep, 453 donkeys, mules, horses and 189 pigs in the Ntabazinduna Reserve by 1930.⁷⁵ Oral testimony also stressed that there were far too many donkeys and goats with their destructive grazing habits in the Reserve between the two World Wars.⁷⁶

To understand the contribution towards the growth in livestock numbers by immigration to the Reserve, it is necessary to mention the broad development of the Reserves policy in the early decades of the twentieth century.

According to the Southern Rhodesia Orders-in-Council of 1898 and 1920 Africans were allowed to buy land anywhere in the Colony.⁷⁷ The European farmers in Mashonaland and Matabeleland resented the idea of Africans buying land in their midst.⁷⁸ In response to these Orders in Council the European farmers supported and defended the policy of land

73. Ibid., p. 2.

74. Ibid. p. 2; Alvord, Occasional Paper No. 3 November 1930 p. 30 Table No. 1. NAZ, L/2/2/17/10 Table 1.

75. Alvord, Occasional Paper No. 3 November, 1930 p. 30 Table No. 1.

76. A M Khumalo and M Nyathi 27 February 1984; 7 January 1985.

77. C 1042, Native Reserves in Southern Rhodesia, Despatch to High Commissioner for South Africa transmitting the order of His Majesty in Council, 9 November 1920.

78. Palmer, op.cit. pp. 260 - 261.

segregation.⁷⁹ The Colonial Government tried to protect the interests of the white farmers. For instance in 1925 the Land Commission was appointed. This Commission assigned 62 per cent of the area of Southern Rhodesia to Europeans while the Africans were granted 37% of the country.⁸⁰ The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 that became the cornerstone of land segregation in Southern Rhodesia, embodied most of the recommendations of the above Commission.⁸¹ In the light of these racial discriminatory measures many Africans were removed from earmarked European areas to the reserves in the 1920s and 1930s.

The increase in the number of livestock in the inter-war years was due not only to natural accession but also to the arrival of many Africans in the Ntabazinduna Reserve. Most of these African peasant farmers with many domesticated animals came from the Insiza District.⁸² Between 1904 and 1929 one of the most significant developments in the changing economy of Southern Rhodesia was the growth of capitalist agriculture. The number of settlers involved in maize and tobacco production and the areas under cultivation increased sharply.⁸³ In many districts, this led to the displacement of Africans who had been living on the land now

79. Zvobgo, 'Church and State in Colonial Zimbabwe 1921 - 1945': Conference on Zimbabwean History, University of Zimbabwe, vol. 2, Progress and Development, University of Zimbabwe, History Department, 23 - 27 August 1982, p. 4.

80. Ibid. p. 7, Report of Land Commission, 1925, Salisbury, first paragraph.

81. Zvobgo, p. 8.

82. Ndiweni, 18 December 1983; Report of the Chief Native Commissioner, December 1921. pp. 1 - 2.

83. Phimister, An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948 pp 57 - 61.

required for settler farming. Keen to turn land to profit, aware that Insiza District was fertile and good pasture ground particularly for cattle, Europeans turned the area into farms. The majority of the Africans who used to live in the District were forced to shift to the Bubi area by 1923. According to one of the reports of the Chief Native Commissioner, the Native Commissioner of the Insiza District accompanied chiefs, headmen and their people to the Ntabazinduna, Inyathi and the Shangani Reserves.⁸⁴ But numbers of chiefs, headmen, commoners and livestock were not given, as a result the African population and the number of livestock in the above Reserves increased. The Chief Native Commissioner identified one of the main problems of the Bubi District when he said, "The congestion in the Ntabazinduna Reserve, has assumed serious proportions and must be relieved in some way".⁸⁵

The Ntabazinduna Reserve which was smaller than the Shangani area was also faced with problems such as overpopulation, drought, scarcity of food and overstocking in the late 1920s.⁸⁶ Grappling with some of these problems, the Africans cleared thick forests particularly in the area where Ntabazinduna Township is today. They built their homesteads there and brought the surrounding area under cultivation.⁸⁷ According to one of the reports of E D Alvord the area of the arable land was 75% whereas

84. CNC's report, December 1921, p. 2.

85. NAZ, S 607 Box 1928, the Chief Native Commissioner to the Native Commissioner of the Charter District, 20 January 1928, p. 1.

86. Ibid. p. 1.

87. Ndiweni, 18 December 1983.

that which was set aside as pasture ground was only 25%.⁸⁸ This implies that grazing for people's livestock was limited and inadequate, particularly in summer when these animals were kept away from the fields.

A tentative solution to the problem of the scarcity of grass could well have been de-stocking. But for various reasons the Africans in the Ntabazinduna area and other reserves did not want to part particularly with their cattle during the colonial era. They placed a premium on quantity because of the part played by cattle in the rural economy. A man with over fifty cattle was called indoda emadodeni, a man among men by the members of his community in those days.⁸⁹ Since every man wanted to be respected by his community de-stocking was rejected as a solution to the above problem by the people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the years 1897 - 1939. Moreover, cattle were used for paying lobola when a young man got married. The cows supplied them with milk which was often stored in amagula, calabashes or izingayi, clay pots. When the milk was left in these containers for at least two or more days, it became amasi, curdled milk that was frequently mixed together with some cooked, ground millet. The mixture of curdled milk and ground millet called umcaba was considered good food by the Ndebele.

Cattle were slaughtered for meat which was used as relish. And whenever there was a wedding ceremony, a beast was killed for the guests. According to some informants the chief of the Ntabazinduna area had the largest number of cattle, the headmen had also more cattle than the rest

88. Alvord, Occasional Paper No. 3 November, 1930, p. 30.

89. M Nyathi, 7 January 1985.

of the people. A few individuals who were favoured by fortune were rich on the grounds that they owned many cattle. But the majority of the people had 2 - 20 cattle per family.⁹⁰ This implies that most occupants of the reserve were poor. For these and other related reasons the Africans did not want to reduce the number of their cattle.

But at times circumstances forced the Africans to part with their cattle. All informants were agreed that Africans in the Ntabazinduna Reserve sold a few cattle to white traders when they were desperately in need of money for buying ploughs, clothes and other items.⁹¹ But the prices for these cattle were lower than those of the beasts sold to the Bulawayo market by the white farmers.

One of the main reasons why these African cattle did not fetch high prices was that they were often of very poor quality.⁹² The other reason was that the cattle dealers kept the prices low so that they could make some profits when they sold the beasts to the Bulawayo market.

It could be argued that education ought to have been used as a powerful instrument to bring about changes in African agriculture and animal husbandry in Southern Rhodesia before 1939. But a racially segregated, educational system that evolved was designed to sustain a domineering

90. Ibid., Tshuma, Nqamakazi.

91. Tshuma and Ndiweni interviewed on 25 May 1987, 18 December 1983 respectively.

92. I R Phimister, 'Meat and Monopolies: Beef Cattle in Southern Rhodesia, 1890 - 1938', Journal of African History, XIX, 3, (1978), p. 396; See also Native Mirror: Chiringiro: Isibuko, Bulawayo, 25 December 1931, p. 9 V E M Machingaidze, 'The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the role of the State, 1908 - 1939', University of London, unpub. PhD Thesis, 1980, pp. 284 - 301.

economic, political and social order over the black majority by the white minority. The white settler community did not want to compete with the African population group particularly in the economic, social and political sectors.⁹³ The white community believed that it could survive as long as Africans were not given an opportunity to compete with their masters, the Europeans. For this reason the type of education that was given to the African children was inferior to that which the Europeans were offered. Confirming this Sebetso wrote:

"There is a feeling among certain European educationists that the Natives should have a philosophy of education different from the education in the rest of the civilised world.

Hence the outcry, Native education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes and traditions of the people.

The educated Africans are beginning to realise that such kind of education adapted to their environment and traditions, and at the same time divorced from the education of the rest of the world is an inferior education which only perpetuates racial ill-feeling."⁹⁴

As early as 1903 the aim of the colonial Government education policy was to provide Africans with elementary industrial training that would

93. Palmer, 'The Making and Implementation of Land Policy in Rhodesia 1890 - 1936', 1968, Chapter VIII.

94. Foley, G., 'Learning in the struggle: The development of political consciousness among Zimbabweans in the 1930's', Zimbabwean History: The Journal of the Historical Association of Zimbabwe, 12 (1981) p. 49 quoted from Sebetso, L.M., 'What will be the future of Native education in this country?', The Bantu Mirror (5 February), 1,10.

enable them to serve the white community.⁹⁵ The policy did not put emphasis on African academic education, and the type of education given to the African child did not promote its mental development.

African schools were run by missionaries whose main goal was to spread Christianity across Central Africa.⁹⁶ Mission schools that implemented the above policy were given financial assistance by the Government. And those educational institutions, if any, that tried to undermine the stipulated policy were not given grants-in-aid.

According to Zvobgo, enrolment in government aided schools rose from 265 in 1909 to 43 094 in 1920 to 107 122 in 1930.⁹⁷ This corresponds closely with a retrospective estimate that 99 000 children were enrolled in schools throughout Southern Rhodesia in 1929 - although this informant went on to say that only 66 000 children actually attended school in 1929.⁹⁸ Since the estimated African population was 1 055 000 by 1931, probably a majority of children did not attend school in the 1920s and 1930s.⁹⁹ In the case of the Ntabazinduna Reserve there were fewer than ten primary schools by 1929. The outstanding elementary schools were

95. C N B Mahonde, 'The Role of Domboshawa Government Industrial School in African Development with particular reference to Agriculture 1920 - 1942', U Z, unpub. Honours, Dissertation, 1983, p. 3; See also Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 6, 1970 pp. 197 - 234.

96. Macpherson, Life and Labours of Rev. J B Radasi Missionary in Southern Rhodesia, pp. 8, 16, 127.

97. R J Zvobgo, Transforming Education: The Zimbabwean Experience (Harare: The College Press, 1986), p. 17.

98. NAZ, Oral.F1, Harold Carsdale Finkle was interviewed at his home in Salisbury by J D McCarthy on 30 March 1973; 5 April 1973, p. 45.

99. Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Southern Rhodesia: Handbook for the use of Prospective Settler on the Land, p. 14.

Ngwenya, Libeni, Bembesi, Morven and Induba.¹⁰⁰ The total enrolment at these schools run by missionaries was 320 by 1925.¹⁰¹ When the estimated population of the Ntabazinduna Reserve was 1 070, there were approximately 500 children. By 1930 the population of the Reserve was 3 449.¹⁰² The number of children must have been over 1 000 by 1925. It thus appears that the majority of the African children did not attend school in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the inter-war period. Several informants were agreed that in the majority of cases children who attended school were those whose parents were rich in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁰³ Children of the headmen, chief and other people with many cattle, sheep and goats were often sent to school because their parents were in a better position to finance their education.¹⁰⁴

But those parents who were poor were unable to send their children to school. Some rich parents did not send their children to school because they wanted them to look after their livestock particularly in summer.¹⁰⁵ Children were also expected to drive away birds from millet fields the whole day long.¹⁰⁶ As far as such parents were concerned, education was not all that important. Education for girls was considered a luxury.¹⁰⁷

100. Macpherson, Life and Labours of Rev. J B Radasi, Missionary in Southern Rhodesia, p. 112.

101. Ibid., pp. 113 - 117.

102. Alvord, Occasional Paper No. 3 p. 30.

103. Khumalo, Ndiweni, Tshuma interviewed, 27 November 1984, 18 December 1983, 25 May 1987, respectively.

104. A M Khumalo, 27 February 1984.

105. M Nyathi 7 January 1985; NAZ, Oral/F1 5, Finkle, 30 March 1973; 5 April 1973, pp. 45 - 46.

106. M. Nyathi

107. M. Nyathi; NAZ, Oral/F1 5 p. 46.

It was not geared to their socio-economic needs. This argument was strengthened by the fact that teachers and missionaries who ran African schools put more emphasis on Christian Education rather than on the acquisition of vocational and academic skills.¹⁰⁸ Apart from scriptures pupils could have been taught agriculture, forestry, woodwork, cookery, husbandry, poultry and other vocational subjects. Such an education geared to production would have helped them solve some of their socio-economic problems in the area in which they lived. For instance as pupils studied agriculture or gardening, their teachers could demonstrate clearly how the disadvantages of the use of the method of broadcasting seeds outweighed the advantages. Since some of these teachers were missionaries, they could even kill two birds with one stone. They could teach both new agricultural techniques and religion simultaneously, for example, by relating the Parable of the Sower.¹⁰⁹

Apart from missionaries and teachers another source of authority - and hence of potential influence over practices and beliefs of peasants in Ntabazinduna - was that of chiefs and headmen. Chiefs and headmen by the 1920's occupied ambiguous and frequently difficult positions in Ndebele reserves. The reconstituted 'traditionalism' and 'tribalism' of the 1920's "bore only passing resemblance to pre-colonial forms."¹¹⁰ Chiefs were simultaneously having to exercise new powers and responsibilities and to contain threats to social and political order posed by socio-economic changes.

108. Macpherson, Life and Labours of Rev. J B Radasi : Missionary in Southern Rhodesia, p. 127.

109. New Testament : New International Version (New York : American Bible Society, 1982) Matthew 8: 1 - 15, p. 80.

110, I R Phimister, An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890 - 1948, p. 149.

This meant that some chiefs and headmen were unable to exercise the stabilising and legitimating role that the Native Department intended. In the same way, colonial opinions as to the political value of chiefs and headmen varied quite sharply. When Dorothy Condry was interviewed in connection with the work of her father, the NC of the Matobo District, she overemphasized the significance of the role played by the chiefs and headmen in African reserves in the period 1900 - 1939. In her view chiefs were the recognised leaders of the African people in the rural areas.¹¹¹ But Henry Howman, an officer in the Native Department argued that not all chiefs were an effective link between the African rural population and the white Colonial Government. For instance he alleged that, while some District Commissioners worked entirely through the chiefs, others considered these tribal leaders 'useless'.¹¹² Howman's account seems more likely.

Furthermore, it could be argued that whether or not successive chiefs and headmen in Ntabazinduna would prove effective modernizers in the interwar period would depend very much on whether they perceived their own interests in terms of whole-hearted implementation of Native Department policies, or of deflecting such policies in the pursuit of popular support.

Formally, the Chief and his headmen owed allegiance to the Bubi District Native Commissioner who was stationed at Inyathi. The Native Commissioner, an agent of agricultural change in the Bubi District,

111. NAZ, Oral /Co/ p.6 Mrs Dorothy Condry was interviewed at her home in Salisbury by D Hartridge on 18 and 28 Feb 1969.

112. NAZ, Oral / H03, p. 46 Henry Howman was interviewed in his office, Coghlan Building, Salisbury on 10 and 26 August, 1971.

delegated his authority to the traditional leaders of the Africans. In one of his annual reports the Chief Native Commissioner stated that the population of the Bubi District was 23 800 in 1904.¹¹³ This was approximately 13% of the African population of Matabeleland. By the end of 1939 the population of the Bubi District was 38 929.¹¹⁴ The area of the whole district was 10 200 square miles. Obviously, this district was too big to be governed by one man, and this necessitated a degree of indirect rule.

But the Native Commissioner had limited power and authority. His activities were monitored by the Chief Native Commissioner and the Agriculturalist. He was expected to abide by the African policy designed by the Government. Since he was associated with the wielders of political power, Africans were often suspicious of his intentions and economic reforms.

This introductory chapter has tried to highlight those forces at work which helped to shape the agricultural history of the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the inter-war years. These forces could be divided up into two groups. On one hand there were technological and natural obstacles that impeded progress in the field of African peasant agriculture in the Reserve. For instance African cultivators used agricultural methods that were of limited value when resources were scarce - and most had small lands to work on, 1 - 6 acres. In some areas the soil was infertile. At times there were droughts in the Reserve. As a result

113. Report of the Chief Native Commissioner, Matabeleland for the year ended March 1904, p. 10.

114. Report of the Native Commissioner, Bubi District for the year ended in December 1939, p. 1.

harvests were often poor. On the other hand, there were broader economic pressures deriving from the colonial context that retarded progress in this Reserve. For instance males were forced to work on European farms as well as in the mines. They had to work in order to obtain money for a growing range of levies, dues and taxes. During their absence from home, there were no strong people to promote economic progress.

On the other hand the African peasant farmers had to increase their agricultural production so that they could have enough food to eat.

Some grew crops so that they could sell the surplus to storeowners and other traders so that they could raise school fees for their children or buy certain essential items such as clothes, salt, ploughs, soap and so forth.

Economic success in the above Reserve depended on the new patterns of socio-economic behaviour and the ability as well as willingness of the African cultivators to adopt the new agricultural methods introduced to them by the agents of change between the two World Wars.

CHAPTER II

THE NEIGHBOURING FARMS AND THE NTABAZINDUNA RESERVE

The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the relations between the Ntabazinduna Reserve and the surrounding white commercial farms, particularly in the inter-war period. In the previous chapter it was mentioned that the Ntabazinduna Reserve shared its frontiers with five European farms and the Battlefield Block occupied by the amaMfengu.

The lands surrounding the above Reserve were surveyed and granted to various mining companies by the British South African Company Administration in the period 1894 - 1904.¹ For instance in 1894 the areas called Maldon, Gravesend, the Battlefield Block and Outspan No. 3 were surveyed. Annaly was surveyed in 1895.² These lands were not occupied effectively by the Europeans in the years 1894 - 1908. The landed properties Maldon, Gravesend, Annaly and the Imbesu Block were given to the Matabele Gold Reefs Estates Company Limited, Colenbrander's Matabeleland Development Company Limited, Whites Consolidated Company Limited and the Crescens Matabele Mines and Land Company Limited respectively between 1894 and 1905.³

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1. NAZ, S 1087/6 Register of B.S.A. Co's Farms, pp. 160, 186; DO(TB), B 1774 Folio Farm "Graves End"; DO(TB) Folio B 1752: Maldon Farm; DO(TB) Folio B 275: Farm Annaly; DO(TB) Folio B 2042: Imbesu Block; Whites Run Estate C.C.T. 2265/80.
 2. DO(TB) Folio B275; Farm Annaly.
 3. DO(TB) Map 65/00, B1774 Folio, Folio 2042, Folio 1991, Folio 1752, Folio 275.

From 1908 onwards these properties were transferred to certain individuals. For instance Reginald Heberden bought Maldon Farm with an area of 6339.6057 acres from Matabele Reefs Estates Company for 750 pounds on 10 April 1908.⁴ The Gravesend Farm that had become a property of the Rhodesia Consolidated Limited in 1906 was transferred to Steward Richardson for 467 pounds on 19 February 1909.⁵ In a similar manner Annaly was bought by John Sly from Trust and Agency Limited for 600 pounds in May 1913.⁶ The above examples indicate clearly that only after 1908 did white settlers in the Bubi District and other parts of Southern Rhodesia put the land they occupied effectively into production. Confirming this conclusion, Palmer stated that there was a rapid expansion in the field of European farming between 1908 and 1914. He pointed out that this activity ultimately, led to the growth of competition and tension between European farmers and African producers. Using statistical evidence, he argued that as European and African cattle increased in number in the above period, there was a "tremendous competition for grazing lands" particularly in Matabeleland where the land was drier than in Mashonaland.⁷

In an attempt to prevent large scale "squatting", an early law of Southern Rhodesia limited the number of adult male Africans on each farm

4. DO(TB) Folio 1752: Maldon Farm.

5. DO(TB) Folio B. 1774 ; D.D.A. 38/69; Gravesend Farm.

6. DO(TB) Folio 275 Reg. No. 1906: Annaly Farm.

7. Palmer, Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia p. 94.

of 3 175 acres to forty.⁸ This law was violated by those absentee landholders who were attracted by the rent collected from African tenants and this pattern prevailed before 1914 in the Insiza District. Apart from that, poor European farmers living in the Melsetter District were tempted to undermine the law since they depended on African tenants "as a source of ultra-cheap wage labour".⁹ But if settler interests altered from rents as a source of income to agricultural production as a source of profit, the vulnerability of African tenants would be exposed.

Ntabazinduna Reserve men provided labour to the surrounding farms - on a casual or seasonal basis being paid low wages, resulting in minimal overheads for the farmer. In the majority of cases a new worker was paid 10 shillings per month. A boy who looked after calves was given 5 shillings per month by the farmer. Or each worker from the Reserve was given a bag of mealie meal per month.¹⁰ Since the Ntabazinduna Reserve was a major source of cheap labour, it could be assumed that there was no need for each white farmer to keep a large number of Africans on his land. The Inspector of Lands was confirming this conclusion when he stated that there were 12 kraals on No. 3 Outspan in 1923.¹¹

8. Paul Mosley, The Settler Economies : Studies in the Economic History of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia 1900 - 1963, p. 20, See also The Rhodesian Agricultural Union: Report of Congress held on 30 January - 1 February 1924, at Salisbury, p. 15. K Rennie, 'White Farmers, Black Tenants and Landlord Legislation: Southern Rhodesia 1890 - 1930' Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 5, No. 1 (October 1978) p. 94.

9. Paul Mosley, The Settler Economies: Studies in Economic History of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia 1900 - 1963, p. 20.

10. Farisi Tshuma, 25 May 1987. See also G. Foley, "Learning in the Struggle.: The development of political consciousness among Zimbabweans in the 1930's", p. 60.

11. NAZ, S2111/4 Bubi District Inspection Report, 20 October 1923.

In these circumstances which prevailed in most of the areas owned by the white men, the occupants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve, who were faced with the problems of over-population, congestion, and overstocking were tempted to violate the boundaries of the neighbouring farms.

White farmers pursued their interests through the Colonial State. Although to begin with as far as the Company Administration was concerned, mining interests transcended all other considerations, this state of affairs changed over time. After the Legislative Council was infiltrated by the representatives of the white settler community, the Government showed a keen interest in issues, affecting, for example, the farmers.¹² However, the white farmers still felt that the government did not give adequate attention to their problems in the first quarter of the twentieth century. As a result of this thinking, they formed several associations in Southern Rhodesia. These Farmers' Associations were welded together to form a powerful organisation called "The Rhodesia Agricultural Union" in 1904.¹³

It was hoped that the Government would listen to the voice of the Union and act accordingly. This Union held at least one meeting annually. The annual reports compiled by the Union from time to time throw some light on the relations between the white farmers and the inhabitants of the African reserves.

For instance, a representative of the Lalapansi Farmers' Association declared:

12. M E Lee, 'The Origins of the Rhodesian Responsible Government Movement', pp. 40 - 41.

13. Ibid. p. 36.

"In all countries where the white and black races come in contact, the white man's problem and burden is how best to rescue the black races from barbarism and to make them useful citizens of the states of which they have become members."¹⁴

Members of the settler community considered themselves superior to the African population. It was not only the white farmers who looked down upon the African way of life but also the wielders of political power. For instance as early as 1908 the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia stated in one of his annual reports that "The transition of the native from barbarism to civilisation is becoming more rapid every year."¹⁵

Since in those days there were no highly educated Africans who were brave enough to challenge these and other related overstatements, the critics of the black population continued to denounce the African way of life. In his paper which was highly rated by the members of the audience, MacAllister said, "Twenty-five years ago the dominant type of the native was a man physically fit, courageous, cruel and rapacious to those outside his social circle, but within his social circle obedient to authority, honest and highly moral".¹⁶

To demonstrate how wide the gap was between an African and a white man MacAllister declared:

14. The Rhodesia Agricultural Union: Report of Proceedings at the Eleventh Annual Congress held at Salisbury on 24 - 27 February 1914 p. 19.

15. Southern Rhodesia, Report of the Administrator, 1908 - 1909, p. 37. The Administrator of Southern Rhodesia was Sir William Milton in the period 1898 - 1914. His successor was Francis Chaplin.

16. The Rhodesia Agricultural Union: Report of Proceedings at the Eleventh Congress held at Salisbury on 24 - 27 February 1914, p. 20.

"Now look at the same native today. He is weedy, a drunkard, immoral and rapidly becoming a thief."¹⁷

This is clearly a racist and class-based judgment, typical of colonial white supremacist rhetoric. It was an allegation justifying racial and political oppression, and cannot be taken seriously in historical analysis. However, a socio-economic context of conquest, land loss and sharply imbalanced resources opened the way to various forms of crime. For instance a few years later a representative of the Midlands Farmers' Association moved, seconded by a member of Gatooma Farmers' Association:

"that this Congress urges upon the Government the need for strong measures being taken to check the continual theft of crops, small stock, etc. by natives by increasing the penalty imposed on those convicted and by securing greater vigilance in the detection of the offenses."¹⁸

That thefts by Africans were on the increase on white farms was supported by other delegates in 1919. One representative of the Midlands Farmers' Association alleged that 200 bags of mealies were stolen from his farm at night in 1918.¹⁹ A member of the Nyamandlovu Farmers' Association supported the resolution. He alleged that he "traced the thieves to the kraal and got there a scotch-cart full of mealies and pumpkins that had been stolen."²⁰

17. Ibid. p. 20.

18. The Rhodesia Agricultural Union: Report of Proceedings of Congress held at Salisbury on 17 - 20 March 1919, p. 63.

19. Ibid. p. 63.

20. Ibid. p. 63.

But none of these white farmers tried to explain why Africans stole livestock and crops in those days. The thefts of food indicate that some Africans stole in order to solve the problem of hunger brought about by loss of land, colonial dues, and low agricultural production.

Since there is neither oral nor written evidence to substantiate the white farmers' stories, modern historians are still left with the task of establishing the truth.

The resolution put forward to the delegates by the representatives of the Midlands Farmers' Association also suggests that the culprits were not severely punished by the courts of law and that was perhaps the reason why these thefts were said to be on the increase. To reinforce this argument one white farmer said that "a boy who stole 64 fowls sold them at 2 shillings a time pure-bred leghorn birds".²¹ After that he said that the boy was arrested and "he admitted his guilt and got three months' imprisonment on the second prosecution".²²

Supporting the allegation that such a punishment inflicted upon the culprit was not severe enough to be a deterrent to the potential offenders of the law, another European farmer said that the African women and men who stole his mealies and pumpkins were arrested. But to his surprise all women were set free while men were sentenced to one month's imprisonment.²³

21. The Rhodesian Agricultural Union: Report of Congress held at Salisbury on 17 - 20 March 1919, p. 63.

22. Ibid, p. 63.

23. Ibid, p. 63.

According to official reports and oral evidence the African population and the number of animals increased in the Ntabazinduna Reserve as well as in the other parts of the Bubi District in the 1920s. The main factor that led to the growth of population was an African influx in the above area from the Insiza District and the neighbouring farms.²⁴ Population and livestock increases had been very evident even before the 1920's. For instance in one of his annual reports the Chief Native Commissioner of Matabeleland stated that there were 1 600 cattle, 9 100 sheep, and 17 000 goats in the Bubi District by 1904.²⁵ Again it was recorded that there were 36 341 cattle, 9 487 sheep, 21 275 goats, 1 110 donkeys, 20 mules and 6 horses in the same district by the end of 1920.²⁶

In his report the Bubi Native Commissioner pointed out that the population of the above Reserve was over a thousand by May 1913.²⁷ These African peasants owned approximately 3 000 livestock. But by 1930 the African population had trebled itself.²⁸ The number of cattle, goats, sheep, horses, mules, donkeys and pigs had also more than trebled itself. As a result the Ntabazinduna Reserve seemed to have been overcrowded by 1930.

24. A M Khumalo was interviewed at his home on 27 February 1984. N Ndiweni, the Vice-President of the Senate was interviewed at his home on 18 December 1983.

25. Reports of the Chief Native Commissioner, Matabeleland for the year 1904, p. 10. The Chief Native Commissioner was Sir Herbert Taylor, "who had at his disposal someone who knew all about each Province". See also NAZ, Oral/Fe2. Leslie Benjamin Fareday was interviewed in his office, York House, Salisbury by D Hartridge on 19 May 1971, 23 July 1971, 28 July 1971, 3 August 1971, 9 August 1971, pp. 1, 2, 13, 14.

26. Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the year 1920, p. 17.

27. NAZ, N24/1/2, Vol 2, Report on Native Reserves: May 1913, p. 2.

28. Ibid, p. 2.

The pressure on resources in the Reserve was aggravated when 75 per cent of the area was brought under cultivation.²⁹ It meant that only 25 per cent of the communal land was set aside for grazing purposes. Both oral testimony and written evidence concur that people's livestock did not have enough grass to eat in the 1920s and the 1930s.³⁰

To alleviate the problem of scarcity of grass some occupants of the Reserve found the temptation to drive their livestock into neighbouring, white commercial farms too great to resist. For instance, according to one informant who was a herdboys in the 1920s and the 1930s, the inhabitants of the Reserve used to cut off the fence between the Ntabazinduna area and the surrounding farms.³¹ After that they drove their cattle into these tempting, sparsely populated farms.

Confessing as one of the culprits, he said that he used to drive his father's cattle into the Heany Junction Farm early in the morning in the 1920s. He went on to say that his father's cattle were confiscated by the owner of the farm one day in 1924. His father was ordered to pay a fine of four pounds and 2 heifers before the owner could return the confiscated cattle. The informant's father paid the stipulated fine.³² The Senior Land Inspector was confirming the above and other similar incidents when he stated in his report that the "whole area (the Heany Junction Farm and the Government Outspan No. 3) had been grazed down by

29. E D Alvord, Occasional Paper No. 3, November 1930, p. 30.

30. Nyathi, Ndiweni, NAZ, S235/522 NC's report 1928, p. 76, NAZ, S235/511 NC's report 1933, pp. 1 - 2.

31. M Nyathi, 7 January 1985.

32. Ibid.

cattle belonging to the natives on Ntabazinduna Reserve".³³ Incidents of this nature contributed to the growth of tension between the African and European communities in the Bubi District in the inter-war years.

There were several reasons why the white community resented the presence of the livestock from the Reserve on their farms. They feared that these African beasts would probably eat up all the grass, shrubs and other forms of vegetation.³⁴ Then the white men's cattle were going to run short of grass and die.

The Bubi white community also feared that the quality of their cattle would be undermined if they allowed the livestock from the Reserve to invade their farms.³⁵ They believed that their cattle were superior to those owned by the Africans. Both oral and written sources concur that African cattle were poorer in quality than those of the white farmers. For instance in his article Phimister noted the 'poor beef qualities of indigenous cattle' and explained clearly how the quality of African cattle could be improved for the local overseas market.³⁶ Nobbs, too, acknowledged the fact that African cattle were of poor quality.³⁷

33. NAZ, S 2111/4 Bubi District: Inspection Report, 20 October 1923, p. 1

34. Ibid. p. 1

35. Ibid. F Tshuma, 25 May 1987.

36. I Phimister, "Meat and monopolies: Beef cattle in Southern Rhodesia, 1890 - 1938", Journal of African History, XIX. 3 (1978) p. 396. See also V.E.M. Machingaidze, 'The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the Role of the State, 1908 - 1939', p. 284.

37. E A Nobbs, 'The Native Cattle of Southern Rhodesia', South African Journal of science, XIXV, December, 1927 pp. 328 - 342.

Addressing chiefs and headmen from the Inyathi, Shangani and the Ntabazinduna Reserves, the Bubi Native District Commissioner said that Africans ought to "buy better bulls and breed better cattle as the European farmers did."³⁸ But according to one informant it was not an easy task to state the type of cattle owned by the Africans, living in the Ntabazinduna Reserve.³⁹ This oral evidence is supported by Nobbs, who seemed to be contradicting himself when he alleged that the Ndebele captured amabula, the red cattle and imofu, red beasts with small horns from the Dutch in the Transvaal.⁴⁰ These European cattle were brought into Matabeleland in the 1830's.

Although on the whole reliable oral and written sources are agreed that the African cattle were inferior to those possessed by Europeans, it could be argued, that they played a significant role in the development of the livestock industry in Southern Rhodesia during the colonial days.

Reinforcing this argument the Editor of The Rhodesian Agricultural Journal wrote:

"The foundation of most of the troops of cattle in the past in Rhodesia, and the ancestors of existing heads, were the indigenous cattle of Matabeleland, Mashonaland and Northern Rhodesia, and bulls of various breeds were introduced with success in proportion to the discrimination shown in their selection."⁴¹

38. NAZ, S1561/10 Native Commissioner's Report on Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi on 22 June 1925 pp. 2 - 4.

39. M Nyathi, on 7 January 1985.

40. NAZ, S1561/10 NC's report of 22 June 1925, p. 2.

41. Edmonds, T A, 'Cattle farming in Rhodesia', The Rhodesia Agricultural Journal, vol. 3, 1905 - 1906, p. 182.

This quotation implies that to begin with the white farmers reared the "Matabele" and "Shona" type of cattle. In his paper Weinmann supported the argument that the white settlers purchased cattle from the Africans when he said, "but, in addition, considerable numbers of native cattle were acquired by the European settlers as a result of the defeat of King Lobengula in 1893."⁴²

Furthermore, he argued that on the recommendations of the Land Commission established by the Matabele Order-in-Council, 1894, "The ownership of all cattle in the possession of natives in Matabeleland on or before 31 December 1893, was vested in the Company."⁴³

According to a Government Notice of 10 December 1895 the cattle under discussion were sold to the settlers at the price of 50 shillings per head. Adding weight to the above conclusions, the Reports of Civil Commissioners for 1894 - 1895 emphasized "that in the Bulawayo District most of the cattle on European farms were all Mashona and Matabele stock."⁴⁴ Writing later Stigger acknowledged the fact that the Chartered Company stripped the Ndebele of their cattle between 1893 and 1896.⁴⁵ But the exact number of cattle belonging to Lobhengula and his subjects seized by the Company is still unknown. Research on this vexed question needs to be done.

42. H Weinmann, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1890 - 1923, Occasional Paper No. 4 p. 104. (Salisbury: University of Rhodesia, 1972)

43. Ibid. p. 104.

44. Ibid. p. 104.

45. Stigger, P, 'The Land Commission of 1894 and cattle', Zimbabwean History; The Journal of the Historical Association of Zimbabwe, 11 (1980) pp 40 - 43.

But in 1896 Rinderpest swept across Southern Rhodesia, "decimating the cattle herds of Europeans and Africans alike". After this disaster the white settlers "imported large numbers of cattle for breeding, transport and slaughter purposes from Southern Africa".⁴⁶

With the importation of pedigreed bulls from Great Britain and other countries, the European farmers demonstrated clearly that their intention was to improve the quality of the cattle they had. It could be argued that the white farmers did not want their cattle to mix with those of the Africans living in the Ntabazinduna area and other reserves since this would probably undermine the quality of their (white's) livestock.

Another reason why the white farmers tried to keep out from their areas, the scrub cattle from the Ntabazinduna Reserve was of poor health. It was reported that several cattle died of Anthrax in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the 1920s.⁴⁷ The European settlers, feared that the affected African cattle would probably transmit this fatal disease across the farms, surrounding the Ntabazinduna Reserve. To contain the spread of this disease it was decided that the Reserve should be fenced. It was suggested that the subdivision C Gravesend Farm should be fenced in 1927.⁴⁸

46. Weimann, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1890 - 1923, (1972) p. 105.

47. NAZ, S607 Box 1926 First Report on Anthrax Outbreak in the Ntabazinduna Reserve, 1926, p. 1.

48. NAZ, S138/21 Accountant Department of Lands to the Chief Native Commissioner, Salisbury, 31 May 1927, p. 1.

Supporting this move, the Chief Native Commissioner emphasized that "such a measure was desirable in view of the outbreak of Anthrax in the Reserve."⁴⁹

Apart from the African cattle, the inhabitants of the Reserve also trespassed. For instance the Bubi Native Commissioner stated in one of his letters that he had received "complaints of natives trespassing" from the Bubi Farmers' Association in 1924.⁵⁰ He alleged that some of the culprits were arrested by the British South Africa Police. But one defect of these official records is that the Chief Native Commissioner did not cite figures and names of the Africans from the Ntabazinduna Reserve, who were arrested for trespassing in the 1920s.

A representative of the Umvukwe Farmers' Association proposed, seconded by that of the Midlands Farmers' Association at the meeting held at Gwelo now Gweru by the Rhodesian Agricultural Union "that the Government be urged to take drastic measures to suppress stock thefts, which are on the steady increase".⁵¹

He also said that Africans had started to use ploughs in his district and as a result, "The amount of stealing in trek gear and plough parts was tremendous."⁵² Thefts were not only said to be on the increase in the Umvukwe District but also in other parts of Southern Rhodesia in the

49. Ibid. p. 1.

50. NAZ, S607 Box 1924, the Native Commissioner, Inyathi writing to the Secretary of Bubi Farmers' Association, 27 February 1924, p. 2.

51. The Rhodesian Agricultural Union: Report of Congress held at Gwelo on 3 - 5 May 1920, p. 58.

52. Ibid. p. 49.

1920s. For instance, Bazaley alleged that Africans stole plough shares from the Gravesend Farm in 1923.⁵³ It was frequently assumed that the culprits were Africans, living in the Ntabazinduna Reserve. While these farm implements might instead have been stolen by African tenants, these and other allegations contributed to the growth of hostilities between the occupants of the Reserve and the white farmers in the Bubi area in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the light of strained relations between these two communities, the Bubi Farmers' Association passed a resolution asking the Colonial Government to remove the Ntabazinduna Reserve to "some less populated district."⁵⁴

The white farmers thought that this was a sound solution to the problem of border violation by the Ntabazinduna people in the inter-war years. Their underlying motive was perhaps to drive out the African population from this region so that they could occupy the fertile parts of the Ntabazinduna Reserve.

The above resolution was rejected by the newly elected Responsible Government on the grounds that it had no power to alter the existing African reserves as fixed by the Order-in-Council of 1920.⁵⁵ If the Government had listened to the crying voice of the Bubi Farmers' Association and implemented the resolution under discussion, the rift between the white commercial farms and the Ntabazinduna Reserve would

53. NAZ, S 607 N.C., Inyathi writing to the secretary of Bubi Farmers' association, 27 February 1924. p. 1.

54. Ibid. p. 1.

55. Ibid. p. 1.

undoubtedly have been widened. According to oral testimony the people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve like those of other African areas were attached to the land where their ancestors were buried.⁵⁶ Any attempt by the settler Government to force the Africans to shift to a new region was likely to be met with resistance. After the rejection of the above resolution by the Colonial Government, the Chief Veterinary Surgeon provided a tentative solution to the problems of the frontier facing the two communities. In his letter to the District Veterinary Surgeon he mentioned that the northern, eastern, and western boundaries of the Reserve were all fenced. This preceding statement implies that the southern boundary was not fenced. There is neither written nor oral source, stating the reason why this boundary was not fenced for some time. According to the Chief Veterinary Surgeon's letter of April 1927 the gap that was not fenced was "about two miles", in length.⁵⁷ In his view fencing "would give more effective control over the cattle in the Ntabazinduna Reserve and was desirable because of the existence of Anthrax infection".⁵⁸

Supporting the above recommendation, the Accountant in the Department of Lands authorised the fencing of the gap between subdivision C Gravesend and the Ntabazinduna Reserve. The Chief Native Commissioner also advocated that the settler Government ought to pay half the cost for erecting the fence on the grounds that "such a measure was desirable in

56. Chief K Ndiweni, 27 February, 1984.

57. NAZ, S2136/58779(6) Ntabazinduna Reserve and Fingo Location: Chief Veterinary Surgeon, Bulawayo writing to district Veterinary Surgeon, Bulawayo, March 1927, p. 1.

58. Ibid. p. 1.

view of the outbreak of Anthrax in the Reserve".⁵⁹ The other half of the cost was to be met by the owner of Gravesend Farm. According to the Accountant's calculations, the cost for erecting the fence was 63 pounds 6s. 4d. The owner of the farm was expected to pay 31 pounds 13s. 2d. in equal installments of 3 pounds 4s. 0d.⁶⁰ By fencing the Reserve the settler Government assumed that the friction between the African peasants and the white farmers would automatically disappear. The fence, consisting of four barbed wires helped to keep the peasants' cattle and donkeys within the frontiers of the Reserve. But this fence could not stop goats, sheep and people from going across the above frontiers into European farms. According to oral evidence, goats and sheep frequently went underneath the fence.⁶¹ And this contributed to the growth of tension between the occupants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve and the white farmers in the Bubi District. It is also recorded that relations between African cultivators and European farmers were often bad in the Insiza District in the first quarter of the twentieth century. When African cattle trespassed on European farms, they were captured. The owners of these cattle were usually charged at least 4 pounds per beast.⁶² In the light of such incidents Palmer concludes that most Africans felt that "the white Rhodesian farmer ... represented the worst in European racial feelings ... He was harsh, domineering, unfair, inhuman and took the law into his own hands when dealing with

59. NAZ, S138/2 Native and European Administration 1923 - 1933: The Chief Native Commissioner, writing to the Secretary to Premier (Native Affairs), May 1927.

60. NAZ, S2/36/58779 (6) Ntabazinduna Native Reserve, Bubi District, Accountant Department Lands, writing to Mr Richardson, Cape, Town, 15 February 1928. Richardson was the owner of the Gravesend Farm.

61. F Tshuma, 25 May 1987. Mr Nyathi, 7 January 1985.

62. R Palmer and N Parsons (eds.), The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa p. 237.

Africans, some of whom felt that they were placed in the same class as cattle or even lower."⁶³ Oral testimony also confirms that the occupants of the Ntabazinduna area adopted a hostile attitude towards neighbouring white farms when they were forced to pay fines for trespassing on European land.⁶⁴

Although the relations between the Bubi European farmers and the Ntabazinduna Reserve were sometimes strained in the above period, it could be argued that the two communities were often interdependent. Several informants recounted that certain African men, living in the Reserve used to work on the neighbouring farms. In their view these were the African people who were often faced with the problem of the scarcity of food. They went to work for food for their families.⁶⁵ After a man had worked for a month he was given a bag of maize or mealie meal, then he returned to his home in the Reserve. But at times even those African men who had enough food to eat went to work on the surrounding farms. These were people who wanted to raise money for their children's school fees. Others worked so that they could be able to pay taxes. For instance every grown African male was expected to pay a poll tax, umthelo wekhanda of one pound per year by the Colonial Government. The dog tax was five shillings whereas dipping fee per beast was two shillings per year.⁶⁶

63. Ibid pp 237, 251

64. M Nyathi, 7 January 1985.

65. F Tshuma, 25 May 1981.

66. Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1923, p. 249.

That some Africans living in the Ntabazinduna Reserve were often employed by neighbouring white farmers is confirmed by official reports. For instance when addressing Chiefs and Headmen from the Ntabazinduna, Inyathi and the Shangani Reserves, the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District said, "All work on the farms in Rhodesia is performed by your people."⁶⁷

This extract implies that African people gained experience in the fields of agriculture and animal husbandry. Adding weight to this conclusion, he said, "The white farmer had taught the blacks how to do it. The natives knew how to do it." Furthermore, he argued, "They know that a white man cultivates his land even when there were no weeds."⁶⁸

But the African peasant farmers did not put into practice the skills they acquired from the European farmers because that would undermine, for example, their pre-colonial social relationships and the existing division of labour. The N C also alleged that African men "left their ploughing to their women and children who had not learned from the white man how to do it properly"⁶⁹ But in his annual report the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia said, "That the cultivation of the land is done entirely by the women is a misleading idea; 50 per cent of

67. NAZ, S1561/10, Vol 7, Report of the Native Commissioner on Meetings of Chiefs and Headmen held at Inyathi on 22 June 1925, p. 1.

68. Ibid. p. 2; See also NAZ, S138/72 Agricultural Activities within the Department of Development: E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 7 February 1928; NAZ, AOH/41 Mr S Chibvongodze was interviewed by Dawson Munjeri at Farm No. 4, Muda Purchase area, 14 July 1978, pp. 17 - 22. Circular Letter No. D C/3. E D Alvord, Salisbury, to the C N C Salisbury, 21 December 1927.

69. Ibid. p. 2.

the adult males worked in Bubi for four months".⁷⁰ This argument which is supported by various reports compiled by the Chamber of Mines from time to time suggests that African men worked for a short period of time every year so that they could return home and plough their fields. Trevor Ncube who acknowledges lack of research on agricultural labour in Matabeleland concludes that "indigenous labour supplies were seasonal".⁷¹

Throwing more light on the above argument, the N C of Umzingwane stated in his report, "The supply was adequate except during the last quarter of the year, when local natives were busy with their lands".⁷² Oral sources emphasize that African men ploughed the fields. Cattle were still considered men's possession even during the inter-war years. Since oxen pulled ploughs, men with ploughs were directly involved in this form of seasonal labour.

Although oral testimony and written evidence concur that the occupants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve worked on the surrounding farms from time to time, they did not try to improve the quality of their cattle in the 1920s and 1930s. In the view of Chief Tshugulu, Africans did not adopt and implement new ways of breeding their livestock on the grounds that their cattle "had no value".⁷³

70. Report of the Administrator for the year 1908 - 1909, p. 38.

71. T V Ncube "Aspects of Agrarian Labour in Matabeleland South from 1899 - 1948", University of Zimbabwe, Harare, unpub. Honours B.A., dissertation, 1985, p. 9.

72. Annual Report of the Native Commissioner, Umzingwane District for the year 1927.

73. NAZ, S 1561/10, vol 7, Report of the N C on meeting of Chiefs and Headmen held at Inyathi on 22 June 1925, p. 7. The Native Commissioner of the Bubi District was W E Farrer. See also H Weinmann, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1924 - 1950, p. 211.

Supporting Tshugulu's argument, Chief Sikobokobo said, "Traders did not make any difference between a big ox and a small one."⁷⁴

One informant recalled that the price for a big ox was one pound five shillings in the inter-war period. He went on to say that Greenspan brothers who lived in Bulawayo used to buy cattle from the people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve.⁷⁵

The above statements imply that Africans deemed it unnecessary for them to improve the quality of their livestock. They probably thought that whites wanted to cheat them by buying these cattle for little money.

Written and oral sources concur that relations between the Ntabazinduna Reserve and the white neighbouring farms were often strained. But these two communities were also inter-dependent. For instance on one hand, the African peasants who ran short of money and food, sold themselves to the labour market established by the white farmers. On the other the European farmers looked upon the Ntabazinduna Reserve as their main 'pool of cheap labour'. In conclusion it could be argued that this nature of inter-dependence led ultimately to clashes between the two communities.

74. NAZ, S 1561/10, vol. 7 Report of the N C, 1925, p. 7.

75. F Z Tshuma 25 May 1987.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARTERED BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA GOVERNMENT'S

AGRICULTURAL POLICY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

THE NTABAZINDUNA RESERVE IN THE PERIOD 1897 - 1923

The year 1890 was a landmark in the development of the history of the region lying between the Limpopo and the Zambezi Rivers. Before 1890 this area was divided into two main parts, namely Mashonaland and Matabeleland. In his paper Palmer concluded that "gold was the prime motive behind the occupation of 1890, both for its own sake and for its potential, political significance as a counterweight to the Transvaal".¹

He reinforced his conclusion by stating that "although each pioneer was entitled to a free farm of 500 morgen (3 175 acres), in fact many of them disposed of these rights to speculators such as Johnson Willoughby White en route to Salisbury".²

The above quotation suggests that gold mining remained the most important industry in Southern Rhodesia in the period 1890 - 1923. Lee argues that the B.S.A.Co. and the settlers in the 1890's hoped that the future of Southern Rhodesia would be based on the gold mining industry.

1. R H Palmer, Aspects of Rhodesia Land Policy 1890 - 1936 (Salisbury: The Central Africa Historical Association, Local Series 22. 1968) p. 7.

2. Ibid. p. 7.

In the light of this consideration the mining sector "was favoured by legislation and other benefits at the expense of the rest of the community."³ This statement implies that the Company Administration neglected the interests of both the white farmers and the African cultivators across Southern Rhodesia. But Lee argues further that at a later stage "gold resources of the country were proving inadequate for a foundation for a permanent policy of favouring mining capitalist companies in order to promote general development and settlement."⁴ When it was realised that the premise on which this policy was based was false, the B.S.A.Co. Administration began to encourage the growth of the white farming industry from 1904. Statistical data quoted from various sources by Lee confirm that there was a great expansion in the field of white farming industry. For instance the number of white farms being worked went up from 317 in 1903 to 948 in 1905. The number of whites engaged in agriculture also went up from 879 in 1904 to 2067 by 1911.⁵ Despite this expansion in the agrarian sector, the white commercial farmers appear to have been unable to grow enough food for local consumption. Supporting this conclusion, Lee alleges that as late as 1906 Southern Rhodesia "was still importing maize to the value of 20 221 pounds."⁶ The word still in this context suggests that this country used to import maize for local consumption even before 1906. A few authorities concur that African peasant producers played a significant role in the food-producing sector. According to Phimister this sector was "primarily in the hands of peasant producers until

3. E.M. Lee, 'The Origin of the Responsible Government Movement' p. 36.

4. Ibid p. 37.

5. Ibid. p. 39.

6. Ibid. p. 40.

shortly after the First World War."⁷ Elizabeth Schmidt was echoing Phimister's conclusion when she wrote:

"They (the Europeans) found it cheaper to buy their supplies from African producers whom, in any event, were more knowledgeable about local conditions and suitable practices."⁸

Ranger, writing earlier than Schmidt and Phimister, argued that "African cultivators .. for decades .. could out-produce and out-perform European farming."⁹ In view of the above quotations it is possible to conclude that the white population was fed mainly by the African peasant producers in Southern Rhodesia in the first phase of the colonial rule.

But oral testimony and written evidence indicate that this was not true in the case of the Ntabazinduna Reserve and other areas in Matabeleland, particularly in the period 1897 - 1923. The Native Commissioner in charge of the Province of Matabeleland stated in one of his reports that "irrigation and other methods of improvement were not yet applied to the native lands by 1904."¹⁰ Nineteen years later the Bubi Native Commissioner's annual reports emphasized that "No

7. R Palmer and N Parsons, (eds.), The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa, p. 255.

8. Elizabeth Schmidt, 'Women, Agriculture and Social Change in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 - 1934 with special reference to the Goromonzi District', Seminar Paper, U.Z., May 1986, p. 2.

9. Terence Ranger, 'Growing from the Roots: Reflections on Peasant Research in Central and Southern Africa', Journal of Southern African Studies, 5 (1978) p. 99.

10. Report of the Native Commissioner Matabeleland, 1904, p. 3.

improvements were noticeable in the methods of agriculture".¹¹ As a result the African agricultural production was very low in the Ntabazinduna, Shangani and the Inyathi Reserves in the first quarter of the twentieth century. According to several informants African peasants got less than a bag of grain from an acre.¹² Even the local newspaper printed during the colonial days declared: "The yields from ordinary native farming are very low. Most natives who follow the methods of their fathers reap only one or two bags per acre."¹³ This quotation suggests that as late as 1931 that there were many Africans who still used their old agricultural methods. Between 1910 and 1930 the number of ploughs which were in use in African areas increased from 2 794 to 10 189 in Southern Rhodesia.¹⁴ It could be assumed that African crop production increased during the above period. But according to one scholar the yields in bags of maize per acre decreased in the first quarter of the twentieth century.¹⁵ The Morris Carter Commission's report confirmed the conclusion of Weinmann when it said, "Although a larger area of land was being cultivated with the aid of the plough, the yield per acre was often less than it was in the old days when women

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11. Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1923, pp. 244 - 246. See also S235/502 District Annual Report 1925 p. 3; S235/504 District Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1926 p. 3; NAZ, S235/505 District Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1927, p. 4.
 12. M Nyathi was interviewed on 7 January 1985; MaMthethwa was interviewed on 19 August 1984; F Tshuma was interviewed in May 1987.
 13. Native Mirror: Chiringiriro : Isibuko Bulawayo, 25 December 1931 No. 5 p. 9. This paper was written in three main languages of Rhodesia namely English, Shona and Ndebele.
 14. H Weinmann, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1924 - 1950 p. 214.
 15. Ibid. p. 214.

cultivated the land with the hoe".¹⁶

Adding more weight to this argument, the Native Commissioner of the Mazoe District declared in his report:

"Ploughs are being purchased to an increasing extent but it is doubtful whether their use is really beneficial and not a curse to the native farmer, large areas are just scratched and no improvement in the yield is observable, nor is the quality of the grain ...".¹⁷

According to some informants the majority of African peasant producers did not have ploughs in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the first quarter of the twentieth century.¹⁸ In one of his papers Alvord stated that there were fewer than three hundred ploughs in this area as late as 1930.¹⁹ African cultivators were poor and could not buy ploughs, harrows, cultivators and other new agricultural implements during the reign of the B.S.A.Co.. It could be argued that since these peasant producers did not know how to use these new agricultural implements properly it would probably have not made any difference, even if the African possessed the above equipment, between 1900 and 1926. The African cultivators needed guidance in the field of farming in order for them to increase their agricultural production. Keigwin was confirming this conclusion when he wrote sixty years ago:

"Thousands of ploughs were bought. But the acquisition of a plough had not brought much improvement in

16. Ibid. p. 202.

17. Ibid. p. 202.

18. MaMthethwa, Tshuma.

19. Alvord. E D , Occasional Paper No. 3, November 1930, Table 1.

cultivation. Instances of faulty handling of ploughs, ignorance of the construction and setting of, mis-application of methods of cultivation could be seen near any kraal."²⁰

In 1914 the CNC wrote, "The natives of this Province (Matabeleland) are essentially an agricultural and pastoral people and do not take kindly to mining."²¹ Confirming the preceding conclusion Charles van Onselen stated in his book later, '... the Ndebele and Shona remained relatively aloof from the unpopular (mining) industry which had transformed their country, and would consider only short periods of service on the mines during the agricultural off-season."²²

The above quotation indicates that the CNC wanted the Company Government to give African cultivators necessary training in the fields of agriculture and animal husbandry. But the CNC's statement was unlikely to make a great impact on the minds of the wielders of political power, who were not prepared to clash with the white mining and farming sectors. The mining community could not support a policy that promoted African progress in the province of agriculture at that time. For instance, even before the CNC made the statement under discussion Bulawayo's mining commissioner declared:

"It is beyond doubt that the local native is getting rich, and he sees the day not far distant when he need not work at all. Many have already reached it. One can hardly

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20. Keigwin, 'Native Development', NADA: The Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Departmental Annual 1923, p. 11.
21. Report of the Proceedings; Rhodesian Agricultural Union, 24 - 27 February, 1914, p. 2.
22. C, van Onselen, Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900 - 1933 (London: Pluto Press Limited, 1976) p. 92.

see the smallest kraal without its accompaniment of a herd of 20 to 50 head of cattle, plus sheep and goats, and I am told that some kraals possess hundreds - up to 600 head of cattle - a good sign so far as the welfare of the native is concerned, but not encouraging from a labour point of view."²³

It is clear that the mining companies looked upon the African reserves as their chief source of cheap labour. They feared that if economic progress was promoted in these reserves African cultivators would probably be reluctant to work in the mines. In that way the mining sector would always be faced with the problem of the scarcity of cheap labour.

The white farmers could not also endorse such a liberal policy because they did not want to compete with African cultivators at the local market. MacAllister was unveiling this fear to the white commercial farmers when he commented:

"At present the native is a stock-breeder, he will continue for some time in producing foundation stock for the settler and rancher, but as an agriculturalist, his business is nearly finished. The settler, with improved methods of culture, will squeeze the native out of putting better quality of produce on the market."²⁴

Four years after the above statement was made Herbert Taylor, the CNC stated in his report that:

23. I, Phimister, An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890 - 1948, pp. 64, 65; MB 6/1/3, Mining Commissioner, Bulawayo, report for year ended 31 December 1907.

24. Report on the Proceedings at the Eleventh Congress, 24 - 27 February 1914, Rhodesian Agricultural Union, p. 21.

"The native should be trained not so much as a competitor with the white man in the business of life, but as a useful auxiliary to help in the progress of the country."²⁵

Again the CNC, showing a consistent attitude towards the African peasant producers, was cautious about what he wrote. As shown by his statement he did not want the white farmers to clash with the Administrators over African agricultural policy. Then it is clear that in the years 1900 - 1918 the government did not intervene in African agrarian sector in the Ntabazinduna Reserve and other black areas.

In the light of these and other related considerations Weinmann concluded that "the policy of the administration was to allow the Africans to live their traditional life and its attitude towards African land use was therefore rather indifferent" during the Company period.²⁶

The First World War impeded economic progress in the African reserves and the white areas. As an integral part of the British Empire Southern Rhodesia participated in the Great War against the Central Powers. The manpower and financial resources which could have been utilised to promote economic and social development in the African areas, including the Ntabazinduna Reserve, were drained by this bloody conflict.

After the war the Government demonstrated its first intentions of bringing about an agricultural change in the reserves by participating directly in African education. For instance in 1920 the Government voted

25. Report of the Chief Native Commissioner 1918, p. 4.

26. Weinmann, H, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1924 - 1950, p. 201.

a sum of 3 250 pounds for economic development in the African reserves.²⁷ This was a small sum of money when one takes into account the area of each reserve to be developed. However, it reflected a new level of concern in the administration about longer-term developments in Reserve areas.

This move was soon followed by the appointment of Keigwin to the post of Director of the Native Development. The creation of this new office shows that the wielders of political power were concerned about the chaotic socio-economic conditions that prevailed in some of the African reserves after 1918. Keigwin is often associated with the establishment of the first African Industrial and Agricultural Training Centres, namely Domboshawa and Tjolotjo.²⁸ Domboshawa and Tjolotjo (Tsholotsho), which were directly controlled by the Government, were opened in 1921 and 1922 respectively.

According to Harold Finkle these two government schools were established specifically for the purpose of educating Africans for reserve work.²⁹ That these industrial and agricultural institutions were to produce men that would serve their own people in the reserves in Southern Rhodesia in the interwar years is supported by Keigwin's long statement. In his report Keigwin declared that Domboshawa and Tjolotjo were expected to deal with:

27. NAZ, S 138/10 African Advancement. S T Taylor to the Chief Native Commissioner, 13 May 1924, p. 1.

28. NAZ, S138/206 Training of Native Agricultural Demonstrators. CNC to secretary to the Premier 18 November 1926, p. 2.

29. NAZ, Oral /F1 5, p. 29 Harold Carsdale Finkle was interviewed at his home, Hatfield, in Salisbury by J D McCarthy on 30 March 1973 and 5 April 1973.

"the simplest and humblest vocation of the people, building them up in amongst their own people in their own villages instead of taking individuals away from their home surroundings and collecting them in central institutes where they are properly trained on European lines and in European directions....we are concerned primarily with the natives who live in a more or less communal way in the reserves ... they cannot be allowed to drift as they are without any organised system of guidance and instruction. Use of ploughs is a sign of progress .. it is evident that on the one hand native conservatism has to be broken down, and on the other it is desirable that some means should be devised whereby the progressive native may be instructed in the proper use of his new implements."³⁰

This paternalist and self-consciously "progressive" approach clearly envisaged that reserve-based trainees would go back to their home areas and show their people how to use new agricultural methods. The new educational institutions - in line with renewed attempts in the 1920's to bolster "tradition" tended to reinforce ethnicity. The song that was often sung in Shona at Domboshawa seemed to foster the growth of the spirit of regionalism and tribalism among the Shona people. The song was divided into the following 4 stanzas:

"We are the people of Domboshawa,
We have come from many villages,
We have come so that we may learn,
We are looking for the way of knowledge.

Chorus

Dombo, Dombo, Domboshawa,
Our place, our mother,
Praise ye all the name of
Domboshawa.

30. E Punt, 'The Development of African Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the interwar years' unpub. M.A. thesis, University of Natal, 1979, pp. 65 - 66, quoted from H S Keigwin, Report on the suggested Industrial Development of Natives, 1920, pp. 3 - 4.

We learn to plough and plant;
We learn to build and plane;
We learn with book and pen;
We learn to play and sing.

In our work here day by day
We learn to help each other,
So little by little my brothers,
We are building this school of ours.
In the days when you have gone away
Strengthen then your hearts, my friends,
Domboshawa shall give you the power
To bring right on to the end."³¹

The male students activities at Domboshawa mentioned in the song were confirmed by the Director of the Native Education Department during the Colonial era when he said, "Fellow Africans were trained in building, carpentry, blacksmithing, welding and agriculture."³²

The Shona establishment of Domboshawa had its Ndebele counterpart at Tjolutjo, seventy miles north west of Bulawayo.

A graduate of this school was connected with agricultural demonstration work in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The type of education offered at both institutions seemed to have been geared to the socio-economic needs of the Africans in the reserves.

But one of the critics of the Government African agricultural policy argued that the African problem could not be solved "by training natives

31. Alvord, E D, 'Agricultural Demonstration work on Native Reserves; Native Mirror: Chiringiriro: Isibuko, Bulawayo, 25 December 1935, p. 13

32. NAZ, Oral /F1 5 Finkle, p. 29.

on European lines".³³ He asserted, "The problem before us is not that of educating the native, it is to know what to do with him when we have educated him."³⁴

This extract suggests that Africans who completed their studies at these institutions often failed to find suitable jobs. One interviewee, confirming this said "With the economic position in the Reserves they (the African demonstrators) just didn't make any money."³⁵

As their expectations and ambitions were frustrated by lack of suitable employment and low pay in the rural areas, the above informant alleged that "they (the demonstrators) went on to farms, small towns to look for work to practice their trade."³⁶ But this was not true in the case of the Ntabazinduna Reserve. The two African demonstrators who were trained at Tjolotjo worked in the above area for a relatively long period of time. For instance, Mbuso Ndiweni and Mabhada Maphosa served as agricultural demonstrators in this Reserve for 7 and 5 years respectively.³⁷

To make economic progress the Africans were supposed to adopt and implement new agricultural methods. In that way their survival in the capitalist state would be guaranteed. However, if they rejected the new

33. N H Wilson, 'The Development of Native Reserves', NADA, the Southern Rhodesia Native Department Annual 1923, p. 87.

34. Ibid. p. 87.

35. NA2, Oral/F1 5 Harold Carsdale Finkle was interviewed by J D MacCarthy on 30 March 1973 and 5 April 1973, p. 29.

36. Ibid. p. 29.

37. NA2, S235/505 - 517 NC's District Annual Reports from the years 1927 - 1939.

ways of life, it was thought the African population would disintegrate.

Although it was Government's policy to help the Africans increase their crop production in order to make the reserves capable of sustaining the steadily increasing number of occupants, the Director of Native Development observed that there was little sign of improvement in their (African) home life by 1923.³⁸ The annual reports of the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District stressed that no improvements were "noticeable in the methods of agriculture" in the Ntabazinduna, Inyathi and the Shangani Reserves as late as 1926.³⁹

Accounting for this economic stagnation in the reserves E D Alvord said, "A white man could not teach Agriculture to the superstitious, stooped African who attributed high crop yields to 'muti' witchcraft and favour of the ancestral spirits".⁴⁰

Radasi also wrote that Africans believed very much in witchcraft.⁴¹ Adding more weight to the above conclusions the Director of the Native Development Department asserted, "The native nature is conservative,

38. H S Keigwin, 'Native Development', NADA the Southern Rhodesian Native Affairs Department Annual, 1923, . p. 11.

39. Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District for the year ended December 1923, pp. 244 - 246; See also NAZ, S235/502 District Annual Report. 1925, p. 3. NAZ, S 235/504 District Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1927, p. 4.

40. NAZ, E D Alvord, 'The Gospel of the Plow or A guided destiny' M FC 53 copied Departmentally from typescript original in the possession of Mrs E D Alvord, p. 1. A useful source throwing more light on E D Alvord's findings with regard to obstacles, standing in the way to economic progress in the African reserves in Southern Rhodesia.

41. M Macpherson, (ed), Life and Labours of Rev. J B Radasi Missionary in Rhodesia. p. 19.

averse to innovations, ignorant of any such thing as the force of economic pressure."⁴² The above extracts ought to be taken seriously since they have far reaching implications.

Thirty-nine years later Kona declared, "The Ndebele are more resistant suspicious of new ideas that cut across their mode of life."⁴³ All these quotations concurred that conservatism was a strong force at work in African areas including the Ntabazinduna Reserve during the colonial era. Conservatism appeared to have been part and parcel of African culture and religion. But conservatism was not the only factor that impeded economic progress in the reserves. Yudelman argues, "If producers are to increase their output and move up the marketing ladder, they must have the incentive to increase their input of effort."⁴⁴

Oral testimony and written evidence concur that there were no strong incentives for the Africans to increase their agricultural production and improve the quality of their livestock. For instance one informant alleged that stores were rather few in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the first half of the twentieth century. Items sold at these stores included clothes, soap, blankets, plates, ploughs and hoes.⁴⁵ This list of items

42. H S Keigwin, 'Native Department', NADA: The Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department Annual, 1923, p. 12.

43. W H Kona, 'The Human Factor in Rural Development in the Federation. The Impact of Historical Events on the African Peoples of Southern Rhodesia', Salisbury, 1962, p. 2.

44. M Yudelman, Africans on the Land: Economic Problems of Africans Agricultural Development in Southern, Central and East Africa, with special reference to Southern Rhodesia (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 174.

45. K Ndiweni, 18 December, 1983; M Nyathi, 7 January 1985; See also M Yudelman, Africans on the Land; Economic Problems on Africans' Agricultural Development in Southern Central and East Africa with special Reference to Southern Rhodesia, p. 175.

implies that these stores offered a narrow range of attractive goods. Even if the Africans sold their agricultural produce and got a lot of money from their transactions, they would not have found a variety of articles to buy. Wilson said, "But unless the life of the reserve is vitalised, the great bulk of the educated and progressive natives will congregate in towns. I want to make reserve life a satisfying and satisfactory substitute."⁴⁶

But as early as 1898 some Africans had already found life in Bulawayo more attractive than in the rural areas. According to the Native Commissioner's reports some of these Africans were from the Ntabazinduna, Inyathi and Shangani Reserves. To reduce the numbers of these people who went to stay in Bulawayo, it was thought that agricultural and other economic changes were to be effected in the reserves. Again, Wilson, supporting this idea, declared: "they must be in the reserves ample opportunity for all economic, social and political wants of the advancing and progressive native"⁴⁷

It was not the intention of the colonial Government to create a situation that could easily lead to the growth of tension between the African population and the white community. According to Wilson the aim of the Native policy was segregationist; it sought to develop an African "in such a way that he will come as little as possible in conflict or competition with the white man socially, economically and politically."⁴⁸

46. H S Keigwin, 'The Development of Native Reserves', NADA, The Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department Annual, 1923, p. 88.

47. Ibid. p. 88.

48. Ibid., p. 88; See also S 138/72 E D Alvord writing Annual Report of 1928 to the Chief Native Commissioner, 4 January 1925.

In conclusion, then, it has been seen that the earliest attempts to develop and conserve the reserves were also segregatory. Previously, prior to 1923, the Chartered Company Government paid lip service only to the subject of African advancement. Oral and written sources concur that the B.S.A. Government did not try to effect an agricultural change particularly in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT AND THE NTABAZINDUNA RESERVE IN THE

YEARS 1923 - 1939

The year 1923 was a milestone in the political history of Southern Rhodesia. It marked the end of the Chartered B.S.A. Co. rule in the region between the Limpopo and the Zambezi Rivers. Simultaneously, it ushered in a new colonial era that was dominated by a government apparently more responsive to the white settler community. There were several strong reasons why the Company rule was terminated and replaced by a white settler Government in 1923. White settlers' expectations, ambitions and aspirations were frustrated by the Company Administration's failure to solve certain socio - economic problems, facing Southern Rhodesia in the years 1890 - 1923. As Lee argued: "Typically, the sequence of events in (Southern) Rhodesia had been seen as a purely natural political development of a British colony, from gaining the franchise to achieving self - rule: but this simplifies the issues involved, and ignores the vital factor of the demands of the settlers themselves. For their dissatisfaction with existing conditions and the rule of the B.S.A. Company was not merely the expression of "British" instincts, but rather the result of internal conflicts over economic conditions."¹

Increasingly, settlers complained that their interests were subordinated to those of Company shareholders. They demanded political and financial

1. M. Lee, "The Origins of the Rhodesian Responsible Government " p.33

concessions.²

Wills, also remarked, "Discontent was felt among many settlers that the mines had benefited to a greater extent than farming and other interests, which bore less direct to the Company."³

In Lee's study of the origins of the Rhodesian Responsible Government Movement concluded:

"The more enduring conflict that arose between miners and farmers after the emergence of a powerful farming organisation in 1904 resulted in a more deep - rooted political discontent which found expression first in the Rhodesian League and later in the Responsible Government Association."⁴

Both Mackenzie and Lee concur that the Privy Council disclosed in 1918 that the B.S.A. Co administered Southern Rhodesia on behalf of the British Crown.⁵ In view of the Privy Council judgment Gell announced that " it is obvious that since the land is not yours (for Company's shareholders), capital for its further development must be sought elsewhere than from you."⁶

2. Lee, pp. 36 - 37.

3. A.J. Wills' An Introduction to the History of Central Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) p 243.

4. Lee, " The Origins of the Rhodesian Responsible Government" p. 44.

5. J.M, Mackenzie, " Southern Rhodesia and Responsible Government," Rhodesian History, 9, (1978) p.24 See also Lee, p.49

6. Lee, p.49 Lyttelton Gell was Director and later Acting President of the B.S.A. Co.

Gell's statement indicates that the Company was no longer prepared to raise money for the purpose of governing this Crown colony. In fact it is commonly agreed that the Chartered Company was faced with the problem of deficits. According to Mackenzie the successive British Secretaries of State, the Directors and the Administrator of the B.S.A. Co believed that Southern Rhodesia would be run better as a part of the Union of South Africa.⁷ Botha and Smuts would certainly have liked to see Southern Rhodesia made a part of the Union. Then it remained to be seen whether or not the white settlers would be happy to endorse amalgamation of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Lord Buxton's Commission made a thorough study of the issue of union. The Commission recommended that the white Rhodesians be given opportunity to voice at a referendum whether they wanted their country to be incorporated into the Union of South Africa or to be granted responsible government. Rejecting amalgamation Coghlan, the leader of the Responsible Government Party declared:

"Liberty in rags is better than well fed tutelage...We have souls to be saved as well as bodies to be kicked."⁸

When the referendum was held in Southern Rhodesia in October 1922, the majority of the white settlers chose Responsible Government. In that way they brought about the end of the Company rule in Southern Rhodesia. Accounting for the outcome of the referendum, Wills concluded that "most Rhodesians owned a common political creed compounded of a desire for self-government, a dislike of Crown Colony status, and a feeling that

7. Mackenzie, p.24

8. Wills, p.244

Union with the South would mean loss of individuality."⁹

Mackenzie explained clearly why various sections of the white settler community preferred Responsible Government to Union with South Africa. For instance he argues that the white workers who earned wages 10 per cent higher than their counterparts in South Africa would not be able to maintain their privileged position after Southern Rhodesia had joined the projected Union.¹⁰ They feared that there would be an "Influx of Poor Whites" from the South particularly after the "Rand troubles of February - March 1922".¹¹

Civil Servants appeared to have been concerned about taxation. According to Mackenzie, a Responsible Government Association poster "gave figures showing that there were 855 individual income tax payers in Southern Rhodesia, but that under Union there would be over 4000."¹²

It will also be remembered that white women were enfranchised in Britain, Southern Rhodesia and other parts of the world after the Great War. But women in South Africa were not allowed to vote. It meant then, that the Rhodesian white women would lose their vote after their country had been incorporated into the Union. For this reason it would appear the majority of the white women supported the Responsible Government Party.

9. Ibid p. 244

10. Mackenzie. pp 35 - 36.

11. Ibid p. 36

12. Ibid p. 36

Mackenzie argues that despite the fact that the early leaders of the Responsible Government Association were farmers the majority of these settlers probably preferred Union to self - government. Cattle ranchers and tobacco farmers saw access to South African markets as crucial.¹³ Maize farmers were pro-Responsible Government because they feared that after joining the Union " their lucrative Matabeleland market" would probably be flooded with South African maize. If that happened, it was evident that the price of maize would fall and the Rhodesian commercial farmers would not probably make profits out of their transactions.

After the referendum and the termination of Chartered Company rule there was a change of government in Southern Rhodesia. The Responsible Government under the leadership of Charles Coghlan was established. But this newly formed colonial settler government was faced with several, challenging, major issues. One of its formidable tasks was to formulate and implement an African agricultural policy that would not clash with the interests of the white settlers.

According to one prominent agriculturalist the African population of Southern Rhodesia was 932 842 by 1929.¹⁴ Lee's figure of the African population was not very different from that of the Agriculturalist. Lee's article stated that Southern Rhodesia had a population of " 33 000 whites and approximately 1 000 000 Africans" when the Responsible Government was formed.¹⁵ Alvord and Palmer concur that the majority of the African people lived in the reserves scattered throughout Southern

13. Phimister, I, An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890 - 1948 p. 116

14. E.D. Alvord, Occasional Paper No.3 Nov. 1930, p.5

15. Lee, p. 33

Rhodesia after the First World War.¹⁶ There is overwhelming evidence stating that these African cultivators were faced with serious problems. For instance in his letter to the NC of the Charter District the CNC wrote, " The congestion in the Ntabazinduna Reserve has assumed serious proportions and must be relieved in some way."¹⁷

A few years later the CNC'S report stated " They (the Africans) have worn out lands, poverty - stricken cattle, poorly constructed huts and under nourished children." ¹⁸

The Colonial Government had to respond to this crisis in the Reserves between the two World Wars. While they grappled with these problems, they had to make sure that the African policy they framed and implemented did not undermine the interests of the white settler community. There was a 'conservationist' dimension to state thinking. They wanted to increase the carrying capacity of the Ntabazinduna area and other Reserves because of the visible deterioration. The white producers and the Settler Administration who still needed African cheap labour had no choice but to try and rescue the perishing, rural population. In addition to that, the Rhodesian politicians were still expected by the United Kingdom Government and Parliament to honour the terms of the Southern Rhodesia Order-in-Council, the main instrument relating to the administration of this colony. Article 81 of this Order-in-Council provided that "The Company (Chartered British South Africa Company) shall from time to time assign the natives inhabiting

16. E.D. Alvord, Occasional Paper No.3 Nov. 1930, p.5. Palmer, Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia, p. 149.

17. NAZ, S607 Box 1928 The CNC to the N C, Charter, 20 January 1928.

18. Alvord, Occasional Paper No. 3 Nov. 1930, p.6.

Southern Rhodesia land sufficient for their occupation, whether as tribes or portions of tribes and suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements including in all cases a fair and equitable proportion of springs or permanent water."¹⁹ After taking office in October 1923, the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia unveiled to the Legislative Council the course the African policy would follow in the 1920s and 1930s. He declared that it was going to be the policy bequeathed them as a legacy by the Chartered Administration.²⁰

The Government stated that continuity in this policy would ensure stability in every sector of life in Southern Rhodesia.²¹ The Prime Minister went on to say that it was the state policy to assist the African population in every way possible.²² This statement should not be taken at face value. It could be interpreted to mean that only as long as the settlers' interests were not threatened the Government was prepared to help Africans survive in the Reserves. These Reserves were considered sources of cheap labour by the Colonial Administration as well as the white producers. The Prime Minister confirmed this conclusion when he said that the Government "should care for the African progress on right lines" so that they could become useful citizens of Southern Rhodesia.²³ But he did not explain what he meant by the term 'African progress on right lines'. Officials on the spot frequently paid

19. NAZ, N 3 24/1/4 vol. 2 Memorandum drawn up by the Colonial Office on Position of the Natives in the Reserves in Southern Rhodesia, April 1919, p. 1. See also C 9138 Proclamation Promulgating Native Regulations for Southern Rhodesia, 25 November 1898.

20. The Bulawayo Chronicle, Saturday 13 October 1923, p. 9.

21. Ibid., p. 9.

22. Ibid., p. 9.

23. Ibid., p. 9.

a lip service to the policy of development, but with the tones of paternalism.

For instance, when addressing chiefs and headmen from the Ntabazinduna, Inyathi and Shangani Reserves, the Native Commissioner voiced that the Colonial Government was "a good Father" who would always help them to improve their position.²⁴ One informant also said that the "Native Commissioners were really the 'fathers' of the people."²⁵

To show a gesture of father-child relationship, he alleged that the Government, for example, gave four bulls to Magola and Somvubu so that the Africans, living in the Inyathi Reserve, could improve the quality of their livestock.²⁶ In addition to that he also stated that the Government gave the above African men and the occupants of the Ntabazinduna area cuttings of cassava as well as cotton seeds.²⁷ But Machingaidze argues in his thesis that "it was not state policy to promote African agriculture; to say the least."²⁸ He maintains this view on the grounds that no financial assistance was given to African producers before the terms of the Native Development Act of 1929 were

24. NAZ, S 1561/10 vol. 7 Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi on 22 June 1925 Report by the Native Commissioner, p. 3.

25. NAZ, Oral/FL1, Sir Patrick Fletcher was interviewed in the Sinoia area by D Hartridge in June 1971. This new, oral archival material, throwing more light on the Government policy towards the African Reserves, was published in April 1979. He was Native Affairs Minister in the late 1920s. His father, R A Fletcher, was Minister of Agriculture in 1928.

26. NAZ, S 1561/10 vol. 7 Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi on 22 June 1925, Report by the Native Commissioner, p. 3.

27. Ibid. pp 5 - 6

28. Machingaidze, p. 56

implemented by the Company Government.²⁹ This conclusion is not convincing on the grounds that, for example, the Government voted a sum of 3 250 pounds to be set aside for African Education in 1920.³⁰

Rejecting this argument, a member of the Native Development Department who was interviewed in 1971 said it was the state policy to create "a fairly prosperous peasantry in the reserves" between the two World Wars.³¹ Furthermore, it could be argued that the state attitude toward the African peasant producers was governed by economic and, to a lesser degree, humanitarian considerations. Working on European farms, in mines and other industries Africans contributed to economic development of Southern Rhodesia as a whole and hence the survival of the capitalist political system. In the light of these considerations the Director of the Native Development Department stated in his report that "The sacred trust of civilization was a plain duty of self-preservation."³² As far as he was concerned it was the task of the European community to see to it that Africans were taught without delay to make the best use of the land on which they lived.³³ If Reserves supported the African population, the 'conservationists' thought that the blacks would not clamour for more land which was occupied by the Europeans. Above that, it was believed that Africans would not probably violate frontiers

29. Ibid pp. 15 - 16.

30. NAZ, S138/10 African Advancement. S.T. Taylor to CNC 13 May 1924.

31. NAZ, Oral/H03 H.R.G. Howman, a member of the Native Department was interviewed on 10 and 24 August 1971, p. 43. See also NAZ, S 138/10 S.T. Taylor, writing to the Chief Native Commissioner, 13 May 1924, p. 1 - 2.

32. H S Keigwin, 'Native Development', NADA, The Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department Annual, 1923, p. 12.

33. Ibid., p. 12.

between the Reserves and the European farms. Stability in these Reserves meant the survival of the white settler community. According to the Chief Native Commissioner the aim of the African Demonstrators, working under the umbrella of the Native Development Department, was "to teach them (Africans) how to grow on one acre the quantity of crops they then grew on 10 acres. In that way more lands for grazing purposes could be set free and thus add to the resources of the reserve (Ntabazinduna area)."³⁴

Both oral and written sources are agreed that the State wanted Africans to grow food to eat. But it was also equally true that the Settler Government did not want to create a situation whereby the African cultivators would be tempted to compete with white farmers. According to one pessimist, 2 000 white farmers were going to be "driven out of the country within the next two years because of competition with native farmers."³⁵ In his report, the Agriculturalist made it clear that those "white farmers who could not stand possible competition would do the most good for Rhodesia by moving out."³⁶ But he was reflecting the State's attitude towards the issue of competition when he said that "it was not their aim to encourage the native to compete with the white farmer."³⁷

In the years 1929 - 1933 the wielders of political and economic power were faced with problems that were brought about by the Great

34. NAZ, S138/72 Alvord writing Chief Native Commissioner, 4 January 1929, p. 1.

35. Ibid., p. 1.

36. Ibid., p. 1.

37. Ibid., p. 1.

Depression. One of the causes of this economic crisis was overproduction. It will be remembered that after the First World War capitalist states adopted and implemented programmes of social rehabilitation and economic reconstruction. Agricultural production was increased in the United States of America and other capitalist states. The World Market was flooded with agricultural produce and other commodities. As a result, prices of these commodities fell. Keyter argued forcefully that in the case of Southern Rhodesia "the plight of European agriculture ought to be attributed to the international collapse of prices, first for cotton, secondly for tobacco and thirdly for maize, a cumulation of events that almost ruined the white farming industry."³⁸

In his report the Acting Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Lands stated that the external market bought Rhodesia maize for five shillings and six pence a bag whereas the previous year the price was seven shillings a bag.³⁹ This implies that white farmers made very little profit out of their transactions particularly in the period 1929 - 1933. They found it difficult to live on the maize and other crops they grew. The small and big farmers put their heads together and tried to hammer out a solution to the problem of low commodity prices. It was proposed that the white farmers who grew maize ought to be granted some

38. C F Keyter, Maize Control in Southern Rhodesia 1931 - 1941. The African Contribution to White Survival (Salisbury; The Central Africa Historical Association, 1978) p. 1. This booklet unlike most of the published material making only passing mention of the subject of maize control unveils "the inner workings of the Scheme." See also L H Gann, A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1934 (Oxford: Chatto and Windus, 1965) pp. 297 - 299.

39. NAZ, S1216/SC1/100/1 The Acting Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Lands: Suggested Assistance to Maize Farmers, 1 April 1933, p. 1.

loan without interest by the colonial Government. But no similar financial assistance was to be given to the African peasant farmers.

Furthermore, the Government passed a measure to protect the white farmers against the black cultivators in 1931. This measure was called the Maize Control Act. It was a controversial and discriminatory legislation. Barber, an economist, argued that this Act was designed to exclude Africans from the market.⁴⁰ Supporting Barber's argument, Arrighi stressed that Maize Control Act was "a formal check, placed on African competition in the produce market."⁴¹ Murray saw this Act as "severely limiting African producers' share of the domestic market."⁴² Phimister made it abundantly clear in his paper that "...., the general impact of the Maize Control Acts of 1931 and 1934 depressed prices paid to Africans in order to subsidise the return received by white farmers."⁴³ He reinforced his argument by statistical evidence. For instance he stated that "whereas the average price per bag to black producers between 1934 and 1939 fluctuated from 1s. 6d. to 6s. 6d., white growers over the same period received an average of over 8 shillings per bag."⁴⁴

40. W J Barber, The Economy of British Central Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) pp. 1 and 26.

41. G Arrighi, "Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia", Journal of the Development Studies, VI (1970) p. 220.

42. D J Murray, The Governmental System of Rhodesia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) p. 90.

43. I R Phimister, "Peasant Differentiation in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 - 1938" p. 16.

44. Ibid., p. 16.

In Palmer's view the Maize Control Acts of 1931 and 1934 "discriminated against large-scale white producers as well as black farmers."⁴⁵ This quotation suggests that these Acts were in favour of small-scale white farmers. Their main purpose was to save this group, that was hit hard by the Great Depression, from sliding into unemployment. Supporting the Act and rejecting the idea that it was a discriminatory legislation, the Secretary for Native Affairs stated in his letter, "The Maize Control Act applies equally to Europeans and Africans. Nobody is compelled to sell their maize. Every grower may keep whatever quantity he desires for his own consumption."⁴⁶ But the terms of the Act were discriminatory. For instance it was stipulated that certain parts of Matabeleland were exempted under the Maize Control Act. It was deemed that it would be unfair for all areas in Matabeleland to be brought under control on the grounds that some parts of this province were affected by drought.⁴⁷

Germany and other Parliamentarians argued that for the sake of justice it was essential for control to be applied throughout Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁸ In that way the Act divided the Rhodesian white Parliamentarians into two camps. Furthermore, the weaknesses of this Act were unfolded when the Solicitor General pointed out that it was difficult to enforce this legislation. This could well be illustrated by

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- 45. Robin Palmer, "White Farmers in Central Africa: A study in Brevity", Oxford, 1978, p. 5. 'Robin Palmer presented this paper to the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom Conference in Oxford in September 1978. See also R H Palmer, "The Making and Implementation of Land Policy in Rhodesia, 1890 - 1936", p. 443.
 - 46. NAZ, S1542/M2 Maize Control 1933 - 1939: Secretary for Native Affairs, to Minister of Native Affairs, 5 June 1935, p. 2.
 - 47. The Herald, Salisbury, 10 and 17 March 1933, p. 10. See also NAZ, S1216/SC1/100/1 "Debate on Maize Control", p. 10.
 - 48. Ibid. p. 10

one of its provisions that stated that an African was prohibited from selling maize to Europeans except prospectors and trader producers. A trader producer was defined in the Act as a person buying from Africans with the intention of re-sale.⁴⁹ These trader producers would buy maize from the Africans at approximately four shillings a bag and resell this grain to the Maize Control Board.⁵⁰ For instance, in 1933 the Bubi District Commissioner stated in his report that maize ought to be sold to the people of Ntabazinduna Reserve for not more than thirteen shillings and six pence a bag.⁵¹ This implies that the Maize Control Board could buy maize from the African peasant farmers at four shillings per bag and re-sell it at thirteen shillings and six pence per bag. In that way the Board could make a profit of 475% out of its transactions. Above that, the Africans living in the Ntabazinduna area and other reserves must have found it extremely difficult to distinguish white trader producers from other Europeans. Any white man exploiting these black people's ignorance could present himself to them as a trader producer. The other weakness of the Maize Control Act was voiced by the Solicitor General. Criticising the Act, he said there was no penalty provided for any breach of the regulations.⁵²

According to one critic of the Government African agricultural policy, the wielders of political power pursued repressive policies in order to

49. Ibid., pp. 1 - 3.

50. NAZ, S1542/M2 Secretary to the Treasury to the Prime Minister, 13 June 1934, p. 1.

51. NAZ, 1085/104/33 Food Situation in Ntabazinduna: The Native Commissioner Mr Johnstone, Inyathi to the Chief Native Commissioner, 10 October 1933.

52. NAZ, S1216/SC1/100/1 A E Speight, Solicitor General, 14 June 1932, p. 1.

eliminate competition between the black cultivators and white farmers. He argued that these black cultivators in the reserves were not in a position to compete with the white commercial farmers at either the internal or external market, because of several restrictions imposed on the former by the government.⁵³ But there was perhaps no need to impose such restrictions on the Ntabazinduna Reserve. According to several informants, the African cultivators in this Reserve grew crops to eat and not to sell to the trader producers.⁵⁴ For instance, Alvord stated that they harvested 4 050 bags of grain in this area in 1929 - 1930.⁵⁵ The average yield per acre was 2.02 bags. Since the acreage under cultivation for Africans was deemed 1.4 acres per capita, it could be argued that each family reaped approximately 3 to 6 bags of grain per year.⁵⁶ This was hardly enough for domestic consumption. According to the agriculturalist's report, Africans were not producing enough grain with which to feed themselves. He pointed out that "during a period of 2 - 3 months each year they were forced to either purchase grain or substitute other foods."⁵⁷ This conclusion is reinforced by oral testimony.⁵⁸

According to several official reports the settler Government wanted Africans to improve the quality of their livestock. For instance one of

53. G Arrighi, The Political Economy of Rhodesia p. 33

54. Chief K Ndiweni and M Nyathi 2 July 1984 and 7 January 1985 respectively.

55. E D Alvord, Department of Native Development Southern Rhodesia, Occasional Paper No. 3 November, 1930, "Agricultural Demonstration Work on Native Reserves", p. Table No. 1 Appendix.

56. Ibid., p. 9.

57. Ibid., p. 9.

58. M Nyathi 7 January 1985.

the Native Commissioners reported in 1930: "Interest given by the natives generally to the improvement, or even care of their cattle, is disappointing. Their one object is to own numbers."⁵⁹ Obviously, Africans were not prepared to de-stock for various reasons. There were no incentives for the Africans to breed better cattle as late as 1925. Moreover, Africans resisted change in the field of Animal husbandry because they were suspicious of the intentions of the Colonial Government and its agents.⁶⁰ Chiefs and their subjects were still bitter about their land and cattle that were taken away from them by the Europeans in the period 1893 - 1914. They thought that the Government was trying to rob them again of their wealth.

In the light of the above considerations, the Government African agricultural policy had a slim chance of success. In the next chapters it will be shown how the Government's agents tried to effect changes in the field of agriculture in the Ntabazinduna area in spite of all these obstacles retarding economic progress between the two World Wars.

59. G van Vulpen, 'The Political Economy of the African Peasant Agriculture in Marondera District, 1930 - 1950.' p. 11. See also NAZ, S235/508 N.C. Annual, 1930.

60. NAZ, S1561/10 vol. 7 Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi on 22 June 1925. Report by the Native Commissioner, p. 7.

CHAPTER V

THE AGRICULTURALIST FOR INSTRUCTION OF NATIVES AND THE

NTABAZINDUNA RESERVE IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

The previous chapter outlined the intentions and main elements of Government agricultural policy towards the Ntabazinduna Reserve and other African tribal trust lands between the two World Wars.

The goals of this African agricultural policy with its uneasy balance between conservationist and labour needs - placed acute demands upon those responsible for implementing it. Ideally, each reserve needed to be directed and controlled by a man with clarity of thought, the gift of imagination, as well as great interest in African progress, particularly in the province of agriculture.

Fortunately, one official met these demands to a considerable degree. Emory Alvord was the first Agriculturist for Instruction of Natives, who demonstrated a substantial measure of determination in trying to bring about an agricultural change in the African reserves in Southern Rhodesia in the 1920s and 1930s. Alvord, a married American missionary, was a holder of a degree of Master of Science in Agriculture. He was first stationed at Mount Selinda Mission where he did excellent work according to oral testimony.¹ His work was commended by white

1. NAZ, AOH/41 pp. 15 - 23. Munyukwi Samson Chibvongodze was interviewed at Farm No. 4 Muda Purchase Area by Dawson Munjeri on 14 July 1978. Chibvongodze, who was born in 1903, was trained as agricultural demonstrator at Domboshawa Industrial School as from 1929. See also NAZ, Oral/AL1, pp. 1 - 7 Mapes Alvord, the Agriculturist's wife, was interviewed at her home, Mount Pleasant in Salisbury by J D McCarthy on 25 October 1973.

contemporaries and black informants, who nicknamed him Murimi Mukuru, Shona term meaning the big farmer.

However, Murimi Mukuru did not stay long at Mount Selinda Mission. The Board in the United States that used to finance the running of the mission station was faced with the problem of the shortage of funds. As a result, the mission station was closed down. In 1926 the agriculturalist, who was obsessed with the idea of showing the Africans how to increase their food production, left Mount Selinda for Salisbury (Harare). While he was in Salisbury, he approached the Head of the Agricultural Department. He was offered a salaried job. To begin with, he was attached to the European Department of Agriculture. But since he was more interested in unveiling new, agricultural technology to the African community, he was transferred to the Department of Native Affairs.²

When Alvord became a member of this Department, he hoped that the African tribal authorities and the Native Commissioners would welcome his agricultural experiments carried out in the reserves between the two World Wars.³ He assumed that these local political leaders would cooperate to get the African peasant producers to change their prevailing agricultural methods.⁴

2. NAZ, Oral/AL1, pp. 1 - 7 Mapes Alvord, 25 October 1973. See also E D Alvord, Department of Native Department, Southern Rhodesia, Occasional Paper No. 3 November 1930, p. 4.
3. NAZ, Oral/AL1. p. 6. See also NAZ, Oral/BR2 Noel Brent who was born on 5 May 1902 and served as Native Commissioner in Mashonaland was interviewed by J D McCarthy at Highlands in Salisbury on 8 November 1973.
4. Ibid., pp. 6 - 7.

African cultivators were frequently able to provide enough food for themselves in both Matabeleland and Mashonaland before the arrival of Europeans in the region lying between the Limpopo and the Zambezi Rivers.⁵ This argument is supported by the fact that Africans occupied fertile lands in the pre-colonial period. For instance the region around Bulawayo in Matabeleland was productive and occupied by Africans before 1899. Supporting the above conclusion Mackenzie emphasizes in his article that "since the Ndebele were also cultivators, there can be little doubt that they were utilising the red and black loams of Matabeleland in the nineteenth century."⁶

Chengeta Zvobgo was confirming these conclusions in his paper when he remarked,

"Most of the early settlers in Matabeleland selected their allotments on the gold belt - on land which is locally known as 'formation'. This type of country contains the heavy red and black loams - which were favoured by the Matabele It followed that the Matabele began to feel the pressure of European settlement within a few months after the occupation. By the middle of 1894 practically the whole of the gold belt areas of Matabeleland had been alienated to companies or individuals."⁷

Palmer and other modern scholars referred to this attractive, fertile heart of Matabeleland as "nga pakati kwe lizwe" (the midst of the

5. T J Hemans, Notes for a Course on Ndebele Customs, pp. 44 - 47; See also Elizabeth Schmidt, p. 2.

6. J.P. Mackenzie, "Red Soils in Mashonaland", Rhodesian History, 5 (1974) pp. 82-83.

7. Chengeta Zvobgo, 'Church and State in Colonial Zimbabwe 1921 - 1945', Conference on Zimbabwean History Vol. 2, Progress and Development, University of Zimbabwe, 23 - 27 August 1982, p. 3.

land).⁸ The majority of the African peasant farmers were removed from this best land and resettled on the banks of the Gwaai, Shangani Rivers and other remote areas. These newly occupied areas were almost barren. The Ndebele often called them amangcwaba, "cemeteries".⁹

Some parts of the Ntabazinduna Reserve were also "cemeteries" on the grounds that they were unproductive and henceforth unsuitable for human settlement. Infertile soil was obviously one of the chief factors that led to poor harvests in this area in the years 1897 - 1926. It could equally be argued that low crop-production in this Reserve was also due to the fact that, as late as 1926, the majority of the peasant farmers were still using old agricultural methods.¹⁰ As a result, they were sometimes faced with the problem of poor harvests.¹¹ The economic situation worsened when many Africans from Insiza and other parts of Matabeleland were resettled in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the 1920s; as a result of increased competition for resources.

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8. Palmer, "The Making and Implementation of Land Policy in Rhodesia 1890 - 1936", p. 64. The term "nga pakati kwe lizwe" has been written disjunctively by Palmer. Using the new Ndebele Practical orthography, scholars would find that this term under discussion consists of two instead of four words which are "ngaphakathi kwelizwe".
9. Ibid. pp. 204 - 207; See also Phimister, "Peasant Differentiation in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 - 1938" p. 2.
10. P Mosley, "Agricultural Development and Government Policy in Settler Economies: The Case of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1900 - 60", Economic History Review, 35, 1982, p. 397; NAZ, Oral/FL1, p. 19. Patrick Fletcher was interviewed by D Hartridge in June 1971. Fletcher was the Minister of Native Affairs in the inter-war years, MaMthethwa, 27 February 1984; See also the annual reports of the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District, covering the period 1923 - 1926.
11. K Ndiweni, M Nyathi, NAZ, S235/502 Report of the NC, Bubi District for the year 31 December 1924, p. 2 NAZ, S235/506 Report of the NC, Bubi District for the year, 1928, p. 4

In response to this serious grave food situation prevailing in the Ntabazinduna area and other reserves, Emory Alvord made the following remarkable statement:

"I made the discovery that an African must see things demonstrated on his own level, within his reach, by Demonstrators of his own black colour and kinky wool, and, before we could successfully preach to him the Gospel of Christ, we must first preach to him the Gospel of the Plow." ¹²

This strongly instrumentalist approach to conversion, assumed that Africans would accept the Christian message only after they had witnessed economic development in the areas in which they lived. It also suggests that African producers would understand the new agricultural techniques better if the new methods were introduced to the people by black demonstrators. The same extract implies that Alvord believed that Europeans were more intelligent than Africans. Therefore he felt that it was his duty to share the experiences he had with African peasant producers. Alvord wanted the African cultivators to use new ways of farming so that they could increase their agricultural production in the reserves. With this aim in mind, he drew up systematically a course of study pursued by African demonstrators at Tsholotsho and Domboshawa industrial schools. ¹³

Alvord did not so much devise this plan as adapt it. He acknowledged that he recommended the system of demonstration which was carried out

12. E D Alvord, "The Gospel of the Plow, or a Guided Destiny". Pages of this pictorial collection have not been numbered.

13. NAZ, Oral/AL1 Mapes Alvord interviewed by McCarthy, 25 October 1973, p. 7; NAZ, S138/206 p. 12 Alvord writing to the Chief Agriculturalist, 25 February 1927.

successfully in the Transkei for the past eleven years.¹⁴ The training of African demonstrators also took place in other areas such as Ciskei, Natal, Basutoland, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal and Bechuanaland.¹⁵

But Alvord ought to be given credit for modifying this scheme in order to meet Rhodesian conditions. It was his duty to decide where the agricultural demonstrator should be located after the completion of his two-year course. Before making a decision in connection with the place where the demonstrator should be stationed, he was expected to consult the Native Commissioner in charge of the district.¹⁶

For instance, in the case of the Ntabazinduna Reserve, he approached the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District before telling the demonstrator where he would be staying as he worked among African cultivators. The Agriculturalist wanted the District Commissioner to identify himself with demonstration work.¹⁷

The Minister of Native Affairs was not satisfied with dual control exercised between the Agriculturalist and the local District Commissioner.¹⁸ However, he understood the necessity of the

14. NAZ, S138/206 E D Alvord writing to the Chief Agriculturalist, 25 February 1927: Scheme for work of Native Demonstration, p. 2. See also NAZ, S138/206 Chief Native Commissioner to the Secretary to the Premier, 18 November 1926, Report on training of Native Demonstrators at Tsholotsho, pp. 2 - 3.

15. Ibid., p. 3.

16. Ibid., pp. 2 - 3.

17. NAZ, S138/72 Chief Native Commissioner to the Secretary to the Premier, 23 February 1928, p. 1.

18. Ibid., p. 1.

demonstrators being directly under the control of local Native Department in the absence of the Agriculturalist. He believed that Native Commissioners were not trained as agriculturalists and hence they were not in a better position to monitor these agricultural experiments.¹⁹

Furthermore, the Minister of Native Affairs voiced that the essence of good management was to fix responsibility, control and hold the individual liable for failure.²⁰ This meant that since Alvord was a trained agriculturalist, the success or failure of demonstration work in either the Ntabazinduna Reserve or other African areas would be attributed to him.

It was his task to assess the achievements of the Native Commissioner, agricultural demonstrator and the African peasant farmers. To get a clear picture of the Africans' responses to his programme, he could analyse and synthesize those reports, which dealt with the subject of agricultural change compiled by the Native Commissioner and the demonstrator from time to time. But these reports could be misleading. The reliability of each of such reports depended by and large on the ability and willingness of the Native Commissioner or Demonstrator to tell the truth. It was necessary for the Agriculturalist to check these reports against his own observation or oral data.

For this and other related reasons Alvord visited the Ntabazinduna Reserve several times in the 1920s and 1930s. On one of these trips in

19. Ibid., p. 1.

20. Ibid., p. 2.

May 1927, he held a meeting in this Reserve. It was attended by sixty men.²¹ Since the population of the Reserve was over two thousand by that time, this appears to have been a poor attendance. In the same report (making a point which is supported by other written sources), Alvord stated that the Ntabazinduna Reserve was more densely populated than any other reserve he visited.²²

The report is a somewhat frustrating source. It lacks certain essential information which is mentioned by other sources. For instance in May 1927 Green stated in his report that:

"Grazing and water are scarce. Arrangements are being made for the removal of cattle from the Ntabazinduna Reserve and Fingo Location where the position is becoming serious to the Lower Bembesi."²³

It is surprising that Alvord did not even comment on the above conditions that affected the African peasant producers and their livestock in the Ntabazinduna Reserve. That these and other African cultivators were faced with the problems of scarcity of water and grass for their livestock was confirmed by the report of the Department of Agriculture which said:

"In Matabeleland generally the conditions were particularly severe for cattle during winter as grazing was poor and water supply deficient."²⁴

21. Ibid., pp. 6 - 7. E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 17 May 1927.

22. Ibid., pp. 6 - 7; NAZ, See also S607 Box 1928, p. 1; S235/511 District Annual Report, 1933, p. 1.

23. NAZ, S235/521 Report of the NC of the Bubi District, May 1927, p. 58

24. Meteorological Report for the year ended 30 June 1927 together with Hydrographic Report for the two years ended 30 September 1927 by the Department of Agriculture, p. 2

Alvord visited the Ntabazinduna Reserve for the second time in October 1927. He compiled a report in which he mentioned that grazing was poor because of overstocking.²⁵ These conditions seemed to impede the Demonstrators' progress in the agrarian sector. For instance, arguing in support of this conclusion Alvord said that the Demonstrator found it extremely difficult in getting kraalheads for whom he (Mbuso) wished to demonstrate in early winter-ploughing because African cultivators' oxen were "too weak to pull ploughs".²⁶

This report does not also mention that another factor, making the grazing in the Ntabazinduna Reserve poor, was drought. According to the Hydrographic report for the year that ended on 30 June 1927, the average rainfall for 8 weather stations in the Bubi District was 14.2 inches.²⁷ The normal annual rainfall in the same district was 23.31 inches, suggesting that there was a deficiency of 39.88%.²⁸

These figures indicate that the drought in the Ntabazinduna Reserve was severe in that year. In confirmation, the report the Agriculturalist wrote in March 1928 stated that the Blue gum plants near the Ntabazinduna Mission (David Livingstone Memorial Mission) were not successful because of the excessive drought.²⁹

25. NAZ, S138/72, E Alvord to the CNC 24 October 1927, p. 71

26. Ibid. p. 1

27. Department of Agriculture, Meteorological Report for the year ended 30 June 1927 (Salisbury: Government Printer, 1927) Schedule 11 - Table 2 (a), p. 14.

28. Ibid., p. 14.

29. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the CNC on Farming Demonstration work 19 March 1928, p. 1.

The report also mentioned that the Agriculturalist inspected the demonstration plot for Madhlelonyeni and adjacent lands. After the inspection, he convened a meeting which was attended by forty men underneath a big tree. In his lectures he compared the demonstration plot with the adjacent fields.³⁰

It is not difficult to imagine the impact of such a lesson, with its forceful comparison. The peasant farmers could also actually see the main differences between the fields whose owners used the new agricultural technology and those of men who adhered to the traditional methods. Alvord emphasized that adjacent plots planted by ordinary African broadcast methods indicated a complete failure. According to his report, very few maize stalks developed cobs in African fields.

He went on to say that even those maize stalks developed cobs which were rather small.³¹

In his view the crop failure in the Ntabazinduna Reserve was mainly due to improper planting and tillage.³² His explanation is essentially corroborated by oral testimony³³ and by statistical evidence. For instance, according to chart A (4) the average yield in bags of maize per acre on the lands in which the peasant farmers used their methods

30. Ibid., p. 1.

31. Ibid., p. 1.

32. Ibid., p. 1.

33. MaMthethwa, an old woman was interviewed on one of the banks of the Ngwenya River on 25 March 1984. M Nyathi 7 January 1985.

was 0.8 for the season 1927 - 1928.³⁴ The average yield in bags of maize per acre on demonstration plots during the same period was 3.7.³⁵

Such figures demonstrate beyond any reasonable doubt that the use of new scientific ways of farming was the main factor that contributed to the growth of agricultural output in the Ntabazinduna Reserve.

In his lengthy report the Agriculturalist pointed out that African cultivators in this Reserve were not used to seed selection, a method that could help to improve the quality of their crops.³⁶ Others stressed the same point. In 1925 the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District voiced the opinion that the African occupants of the Shangani, Inyathi and the Ntabazinduna Reserves ought to learn to select their seeds every year in order to improve the quality of the maize they grew. Lecturing to an audience consisting of chiefs and headmen, he suggested that their people should pick out the large cobs with straight rows and break off both ends of the cob and use the centre of the cob for seed.³⁷ In that way it was hoped that the quality of their crops would be improved.

To make his lectures more meaningful, the Agriculturalist led his audience to a nearby demonstration plot on 19 March 1928. In his report

34. NAZ, S138/72 Record of Native Farming Demonstration Work, Season 1927 - 28, Chart A (4) p. 1.

35. Ibid., p. 1.

36. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord the Chief Native Commissioner on Farming Demonstration Work, Ntabazinduna Reserve Meeting, 19 March 1928 p. 1.

37. NAZ, S1561/10 vol. 7 "Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi on 22 June 1925" Report by the Native Commissioner, p. 5.

he alleged that few Africans knew about these demonstration plots.³⁸ This conclusion is dubious. Madhlelonyeni's plot was right on a path used frequently by the occupants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve. Many Africans must have seen this demonstration plot. Moreover, in one of his reports he stated that the inhabitants of the Reserve showed a keen interest in the coming of the Demonstrator.³⁹ This short report does not state the number and the classes of African people who cordially welcomed the first Agricultural Demonstrator. It does not even tell the reader about the role played by women cultivators in the development of the history of the Ntabazinduna Reserve. The fact that women and children like African men used to cultivate the fields in this area and other reserves is acknowledged by various sources. For instance, Farrer argued that African males "left their ploughing and cultivating to their women and children who had not learned from the white man how to do it properly."⁴⁰ Oral testimony confirmed that African women used to break the ground, sow the seeds and cultivate the crops in the Ntabazinduna Reserve during the colonial days.⁴¹

It sounds naive that a few months later the same people failed to take note of the progress made by those who adopted and implemented new agricultural methods introduced to the Reserve by this popular African Demonstrator. Although some of the statements contained in Alvord's

38. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord the Chief Native Commissioner on Farming Demonstration Work, Ntabazinduna Reserve Meeting, 19 March 1928, p. 1.

39. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 17 May 1927, p. 7.

40. NAZ, S1561/7 Report of the NC of the Bubi District, 22 June 1925, pp. 2, 5.

41. MaMthethwa, M Nyathi.

reports are subject to criticism, it could be argued that the meetings the Agriculturalist held in the Ntabazinduna Reserve before the traditional fields and demonstration plots were harvested, were always significant in the sense that the African peasant farmers were placed in a better position in which they could find it easier to evaluate the new agricultural technology.

Acceptance or rejection of this technology revolved around each cultivator's subjective evaluation but also was affected by collective beliefs and customs. Not only individual peasants, but also a peasant community had to be persuaded. As the cultivator internalised what he saw on the demonstration plots, it was assumed that he would be in a position to choose the better of the two agricultural technologies. The point is that Alvord assumed that individuals would make 'rational' choices; he seemed to have overlooked the resistance to change inherent in communal peasant consciousness. Alvord and his agents of agricultural change always, of course, thought beyond question that their methods were superior to the African ways of farming. This conclusion is supported by oral evidence.⁴²

One can observe the increasing appeal made by Alvord's lectures through statistical existence. For instance his first meeting was attended by sixty men,⁴³ while the next meeting was slightly bigger. According to his record the meeting that was convened at the Chief's residence on 28

42. Ndiweni; O Somkence; Tshuma.

43. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 17 May 1927, p. 7.

December 1928 was attended by over two hundred people.⁴⁴ This big turnout was a clear demonstration of African cultivators' determination and desire to learn the new agricultural technology from the famous master farmer, Alvord.

Apparently, apart from the Agriculturalist's reports, there are no other written or oral sources that throw more light on Alvord's audiences in the Ntabazinduna Reserve. But his 'gospel of the plow' seemed to have been heard even by people living beyond the frontiers of the above Reserve.

For instance, one of his reports states that the meeting which was held at Madhlelonyeni's Kraal was not only attended by people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve but also by the Chief of the amaMfengu (Fingoes). In his report he pointed out that the amaMfengu made a very urgent request for demonstration work to be done for them on the Battlefield Block.⁴⁵ This implies that they had probably witnessed good progress in the province of agriculture made by those people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve, who emulated Alvord's agricultural experiments.

According to one informant the amaMfengu were better farmers than the people of the above Reserve. He went on to say that they taught the occupants of the Reserve new ways of farming.⁴⁶ This is certainly

44. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 28 December 1928, p. 1.

45. NAZ, S138/72 Agriculturalist to the Director of Native Development, 22 August 1930, p. 1.

46. Rev O Somkence was interviewed at his home, Fingo Location, Bembesi, 13 July 1984.

consistent with appraisals made by historians of South Africa, discussing the eagerness of the amaMfengu there to innovate and diversify their farming methods.⁴⁷

This oral testimony suggests that the amaMfengu were already interested in agriculture and therefore responsive to Alvord's experiments. Alvord paid the Ntabazinduna Reserve a visit again on 17 April 1929. As his custom was, he conducted a meeting near Mbayi's plot.⁴⁸ The venue for the meeting was well chosen on the grounds that the people who attended it could compare the results of the agricultural experiments on the demonstration plots with those of the adjacent fields whose owners used old methods of farming. This meeting was made official in the sense that it was attended by the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District. Another important official who was present was the Superintendent of Natives stationed in Bulawayo.

Although this meeting was significant on the grounds that it was attended by over three hundred people including several members of the Department of Native Affairs, Alvord's report mentioned that some plot owners were absent from the above gathering. Unfortunately, it does not state the names or the number of absentees. The Agriculturalist believed that the main reason why certain unnamed plot owners did not attend his lecture was that they thought that he would still go to their plots; but we are left uninformed as to how he arrived at the conclusion. However,

47. Colin Bundy, "The Emergence and Decline of a South African Peasantry" Contemporary Southern African Studies: Research Papers, vol. II, Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978, pp. 38 - 40.

48. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Director of Native Education Salisbury, 30 May 1929, p. 1.

it could still be argued that this big turn-out was a clear demonstration of the African cultivators' awakened interest in the message the Agriculturalist and his Demonstrator transmitted across the Reserve. As a result of his visits and lectures delivered during the daytime or at night, there was a small agricultural change in the Reserve in the period 1927 - 1939. Reinforcing this conclusion, Alvord made it abundantly clear in his report that he noticed "a marked improvement in the way natives were farming".⁴⁹

Alvord's claim was upheld by other officials. The Native Commissioner's District Annual Reports stressed that improved methods of cultivation were noticeable in the Ntabazinduna area in the above period.⁵⁰ Although Alvord and his Demonstrator contributed a great deal to the success of the agricultural experiments carried out in this area, the Agriculturalist gave much credit to the Native Commissioner stationed at Inyathi. In his view the Native Commissioner showed a keen interest in the work which was done by the African cultivators. Checking his view against annual reports of the Native Commissioner, it seems clear that his Demonstrator promoted African progress in the field of agriculture in the Inyathi, Ntabazinduna and the Shangani Reserves in the inter-war years.

49. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 14 January 1929. See also NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Director of Native Education, Salisbury, 30 May 1929, p. 1.

50. NAZ, S235/505 District Annual Report, 1929, pp. 3 - 4
NAZ, S235/506 District Annual Report, 1928, pp. 4 - 5
NAZ, S235/508 District Annual Report, 1930, p. 3
NAZ, S235/509 District Annual Report, 1932, p. 2
NAZ, S235/510 District Annual Report, 1932, p. 3
NAZ, S235/511 District Annual Report, 1933, p. 2
NAZ, S235/513 District Annual Report, 1935, pp. 3 - 4
NAZ, S235/515 District Annual Report, 1936, pp. 4 - 5
NAZ, S235/517 District Annual Report, 1939, pp. 3 - 4

Alvord did not only deliver lectures to the inhabitants of these reserves but he also assessed the achievements of his Demonstrators and made specific recommendations. For instance, as early as October 1927, the Agriculturalist wrote that "consequently the demonstration work on this Reserve (the Ntabazinduna area) had not made the progress they would like."⁵¹ He outlined the work to be done by the Demonstrator in order to help the African peasant farmers increase their agricultural production. For example, the Agriculturalist instructed the Demonstrator to manure and cross-plough Ntongana's plot "to show the value of such methods".⁵²

Analysing the Agriculturalist's reports on the Ntabazinduna Reserves, any critical historian would discover that they concentrated mainly on crop-production. They tell us very little about pastoral farming. For instance, in one of his early reports he stated that the Demonstrator "had been doing considerable work in castrating scrub bulls by hand and with budizzo Castrators".⁵³

This report does not state the reasons why the African scrub bulls were castrated. It failed even to cite the number of bulls that the Demonstrator castrated in that year. In other reports the Agriculturalist mentioned that the occupants of the Reserve were faced with the problems of overstocking and drought.⁵⁴

51. NAZ, S138/72 Ntabazinduna Reserve: Progress of Native Farming Demonstrator, 24 October 1927, p. 1.

52. Ibid., pp. 2 - 3.

53. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 3 October 1927. "Ntabazinduna Reserve: Inspection Native Farming Demonstration Work", p. 2.

54. NAZ, S138/72 Ntabazinduna Reserve, 24 October 1927, p. 1.

Supporting this conclusion, the Chief Native Commissioner wrote, "The congestion in the Ntabazinduna Reserve has assumed serious proportions and must be relieved in some way. The losses in stock last year were heavy and the prospects for the present dry season are bad".⁵⁵ Oral evidence also confirmed that there were far too many cattle, goats, sheep and dogs in the Ntabazinduna Reserve between the two World Wars.⁵⁶ But very little was said to the people of the Reserve about the remedy for the above problem. For instance, in 1933 the Agriculturalist said that "the remedy would appear to be limitation of herds and better methods of cultivation".⁵⁷ Since crop-production and pastoral farming were interrelated, Alvord ought perhaps to have unveiled to the African cultivators for example, the evils of overstocking when he visited and delivered his lectures to the people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve. He could even instruct the Demonstrator to find means and ways of encouraging the African peasant farmers to de-stock. Obviously, one of these evils was soil erosion. Describing the outcome of soil erosion in East Africa, Professor Hukley says "in consequence, you see patches of more sand where once was rich grass, ugly runnels and miniature gorges cutting back and back into what was rolling downland. That is erosion and will continue at an ever growing speed unless the vicious circle be broken".⁵⁸

55. NAZ, S607 Box 1928 The Chief Native Commissioner to the Native Commissioner of the Charter District, 10 January 1928, p. 1.

56. Chief K Ndiweni and M Nyathi 2 July 1984 and 7 January 1985 respectively.

57. NAZ, S235/515 District Annual Report, 1936, p. 6.

58. Ibid., p. 6.

In the case of the Ntabazinduna Reserve and other parts of the Bubi District the Native Commissioner emphasized in his report that there was soil erosion like in East Africa. He argued that ploughing the wrong way was one of the causes of soil erosion.⁵⁹ According to one informant the African peasants used to plough up and down the slopes in the inter-war period.⁶⁰ Obviously, this oral evidence concurs with the above report that this method of farming accelerated the rate of soil erosion in the Ntabazinduna Reserve and other African areas. Beyond that, the Native Commissioner stated in his report that another cause of soil erosion was overstocking. Supporting this conclusion one scholar declared, "Natives and animals have a tendency of walking in single file, producing erodable tracks".⁶¹

In the case of the Ntabazinduna Reserve cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys, mules including horses kept the grass short and made many paths.⁶² In that way they caused soil erosion. The Native Commissioner of the Bubi District pointed out in one of his reports that concentrating large numbers of cattle at dipping tanks was another cause of soil erosion.⁶³ In the Ntabazinduna Reserve the situation was even worse than in the other parts of the Bubi District on the grounds that there was only one

59. NAZ, S235/513 District Annual Report, 1935, pp. 5 - 6, See also NAZ, S235/511 District Annual Report, 1935, p. 5.

60. M Khumalo, one of the teachers of David Livingstone Memorial Mission, was interviewed at his home, Bhekeni Line, Ntabazinduna Reserve, 25 December 1985.

61. W Beinart, "Soil Erosion, Conservationism and Ideas about Development: a Southern African Exploration, 1900 - 1960", Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 11 No. 1, (October 1984), p. 61.

62. K Ndiweni, 2 July 1984; M Nyathi, 7 January 1985.

63. NAZ, S235/513 Report of the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District, 1935, p. 6.

dipping tank in the years 1897 - 1939. In the Shangani Reserve there were 16 dipping tanks by 1933.⁶⁴

During his visits to the Ntabazinduna Reserve the Agriculturalist ought to have taken his listeners to runnels, gorges and other geographical features which were an outcome of soil erosion. As his listeners gazed at these features, he could have explained to them why it was necessary for the people of this Reserve and other parts of the Bubi District to de-stock in the 1920s and 1930s. In that way perhaps the African cultivators would probably have understood better the reasons why they should reduce the number of their livestock. Although Alvord did not show a keen interest in the subject of African animal husbandry, both oral testimony and written data concur that as agriculturalist he did a splendid piece of work particularly in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the inter-war years. His frequent visits to the Reserve were a source of inspiration to the African cultivators under the guidance of the Agricultural Demonstrator. The historical records indicate that by his speeches and actions he was a devoted master farmer who was obsessed with the idea of helping the Africans effect an agricultural change not only in the Ntabazinduna area but also in other reserves scattered all over Southern Rhodesia. All my informants consider him as one of the greatest pioneers in the development of the agricultural history of the Ntabazinduna Reserve between the two World Wars.

64. Naz, S235/511 District Annual Report, 1933, p. 5.

CHAPTER VI

THE AGRICULTURAL DEMONSTRATOR IN ACTION IN THE

NTABAZINDUNA RESERVE BETWEEN 1926 AND 1939

Before the turn of the nineteenth century there were no accurate and reliable statistical records of population in Southern Rhodesia. Contemporary and subsequent scholarly estimates of nineteenth century African population of Matabeleland vary widely, ranging from 14 000 to 126 491.¹ Although these figures were unreliable, all written sources and oral testimony that have been consulted by me concur that the inhabitants of Matabeleland were always outnumbered by those of Mashonaland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to one of the reports written by the Directors of the British South Africa Company, the acreage cultivated in Matabeleland increased from 121 961 to 134 803 in the years 1898 - 1901.² In Mashonaland the acreage under cultivation also increased from 410 581 to 499 011 between 1898 and 1901.³ And twenty-five years later 1881 square miles could be brought under cultivation by Africans in both provinces.⁴ These figures,

1. J R Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos, 1820 - 1896, p. 466; NAZ, Hist. MSS MO 1/1/5/2 Moffat writing to Bruce, 3 December 1888; Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for 30 September 1898, pp. 222 and 284; The B S A Co., Directors' Report and Accounts, 1901, Table p. 16, The B S A Co., Reports on the Administration of Rhodesia, 1897, 1898, 1899, pp. 222.
2. The B S A Co., Directors' Report and Accounts 1897 - 1898, p. 16.
3. Ibid., p. 16.
4. Meade, E, 'Memorandum on the Cattle Industry of Southern Rhodesia', The Rhodesian Agricultural Journal, vol. 18, No. 3, 1921, p. 243.

showing an increase in acreage under cultivation in Southern Rhodesia in the years 1898 - 1926, suggest that some African peasant farmers used the plough instead of the traditional hoe as their main agricultural implement. An African family with a plough could easily bring 10 - 20 acres of land under cultivation.

But according to Reid's paper an African family, using the short-handled traditional hoe could only bring 1 - 6 acres under cultivation.⁵ Reid argued that Africans neither possessed nor used ploughs in Matabeleland in the pre-colonial times. Explaining why Africans had no ploughs he said, "Lobengula prohibited his people from owning wagons, ploughs, spades from traders".⁶ He did not give the reason(s) why the King always refused his subjects permission to purchase these goods from white traders. Reid went on to say that the "use of a plough by a tribal farmer was after European settlement".⁷ This extract meant that the Ndebele were free to buy ploughs and other goods from the white traders after the downfall and disappearance of Lobhengula. Reid's paper could be criticised on the grounds that it did not state the exact year when the African producers began to purchase and use ploughs in Matabeleland. His conclusion that this agricultural technological innovation occurred after the occupation of both Matabeleland and Mashonaland, is confirmed by some reliable written sources. For instance, in one of his papers Palmer emphasized that "by the beginning of the present century (twentieth century) many Rhodesian Africans had learned how to use the

5. M G Reid, "The Early Agriculture of Matabeleland and Mashonaland", Rhodesia Agricultural Journal, 73 - 74 (1977), pp. 98 - 99. Reid used to be a Provincial Agricultural Officer stationed in Gwelo now called 'Gweru'.

6. Ibid., p. 99.

7. Ibid., p. 100.

bullock as a beast of burden",⁸ and had trained their oxen or bullocks to pull ploughs, wagons and scotch-carts. Palmer also pointed out that "other cultivators began to use ploughs instead of the traditional hoes."⁹ Adding weight to the conclusion that African peasant farmers were in possession of ploughs by 1900, the Chief Native Commissioner's report of 31 March 1901 stated that "Natives purchased a small plough called America .75".¹⁰

One of the chief weaknesses of these reports, papers and other related sources lies in the fact that they are incapable of giving the reader(s) adequate, essential, statistical details, covering particularly the period 1894 - 1901. Only a minority of more well-to-do African peasants owned ploughs during the early years of the century. Wallace's paper was confirming this conclusion when it said, "Natives in Matabeleland had 1 000 ploughs by 1908".¹¹ Since the African population of Matabeleland by that time was approximately 217 000, it is right to assume that less than 1% of the African producers had ploughs by 1908.¹² Weinmann also stated that there were only 2 794 ploughs in Southern

8. Robin Palmer, 'White Farmers in Central Africa: A study in Brevity', Oxford, 1978, p. 10. This paper was presented to the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom Conference, Oxford, in September 1978.

9. Ibid., p. 10.

10. Report of the Chief Native Commissioner, Matabeleland for the year ended 31 March 1901, Salisbury, p. 4.

11. Wallace, R, 'Rhodesia and its Agricultural possibilities'. The Rhodesian Agricultural Journal 1908 - 1909 Vol. 6, p. 378. This paper was read by Professor Robert Wallace to the Royal Colonial Institute.

12. Ibid., p. 363.

Rhodesia by 1910.¹³ This statistical evidence indicates clearly that the majority of the African peasant producers were too poor to buy ploughs, harrows and cultivators. As a result they continued using their traditional hoes in Matabeleland and Mashonaland in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Supporting this conclusion Alvord emphasised:

"Our work of preaching the gospel of the plow is fully as important as that of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. The African will have a better chance of after life in the Kingdom if he is taught by the gospel of the plow how to live a better life here on earth. By it (the gospel of the plow) poverty will be alleviated and the people will be raised to a higher plane of home life."¹⁴

Adding weight to the above conclusion, Phimister declared that "most rural blacks, however, neither owned significant numbers of cattle nor possessed ploughs, and it was this broad class of cultivators who increasingly found the economic balance tipped against them, initially by the land and fiscal policies of the colonial state ...".¹⁵

Apart from crop-production the other main economic activity of the Rhodesian Africans was animal husbandry.

13. H Weinmann, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1924 - 1950, p. 214.

14. NAZ, E D Alvord, 'The Gospel of the Plow or a guided Destiny', Pages not numbered on the microfiche.

15. I Phimister, An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890 - 1948, pp. 79 - 80

According to the report of the Directors of the British South Africa Company the black population in Matabeleland had 13 673 cattle, 21 596 sheep and 68 058 goats by 1901.¹⁶ The Shona people owned 30 853 cattle, 26 336 sheep and 109 112 goats in 1901.¹⁷ Weinmann alleges that the white commercial farmers had 11 948 cattle by 1900.¹⁸ But ten years later these white farmers had 164 167 cattle whereas the number of beasts possessed by Africans was 300 000.¹⁹ According to E D Alvord there were 1 495 803 cattle, 771 001 goats, 269 251 sheep, 37 019 horses, mules, donkeys and 37 889 pigs in Southern Rhodesia by 1934.²⁰ Although the reliability of the above figures is open to question, it is plausible to conclude that the number of livestock and acres under cultivation increased at an alarming rate particularly in the African reserves that were scattered all over Southern Rhodesia between 1900 and 1939. Since according to African custom, quantity rather than quality transcended all other considerations, the black population welcomed the new trend of events.

The Agriculturalist for Instruction of Natives was reflecting the colonial state policy when he said, "These lands (African reserves) must support the people and the livestock of the community and no individual

16. The BSA Co., Directors' Reports and Accounts 1900 - 1901, p. 16.

17. Ibid., p. 16.

18. H Weinmann, Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia 1890 - 1923. Occasional Paper No. 4 (Salisbury: University of Rhodesia, 1972) p. 109.

19. Ibid., pp. 109 and 110.

20. Alvord, E D, 'Agricultural Life of Rhodesian Natives 1929 - 1934', NADA The Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department Annual, 7, (1929) p. 11.

could be permitted to go into farming for himself on a large scale."²¹ The Agriculturalist and the colonial state were concerned with problems facing the African population, particularly between the two World Wars and they brought certain assumptions to bear on the issue. To help the Africans solve the problems of overpopulation, overstocking, congestion and shortage of food the Agriculturalist urged centralisation of arable lands and intensive farming on small areas.²² By doing that, it was hoped that the natural resources of Southern Rhodesia would be conserved. The Agriculturalist was always obsessed with the idea of promoting economic progress in the 89 reserves scattered all over the country. He sent out agricultural demonstrators to these reserves.

There seems to be a strong case for arguing that the African peasant farmers would be in a better position to comprehend the new agricultural techniques when concrete examples of the above methods were unveiled to them by their fellow men. But there were also other sources and means of transmission for new skills. African peasants could also grasp the message through direct experience when working for white farmers. Written and oral sources concur that African men who picked up new methods of farming while employed by white men on the latter's farms did a good job.

Since the majority of the African peasants were illiterate during the colonial days, every lesson dealing with these new agricultural techniques ought to have been prepared in such a manner that it appealed

21. NAZ, S138/72 Alvord Annual Report of 1928, to the Chief Native Commissioner 4 January 1929; "Policy with regard to farming demonstration among the Natives", p. 1.

22. Hemans, p. 47.

to a man's five senses including sight, taste, smell, touch, and hearing in order for people to master it. The important role played by every agricultural demonstrator is further illustrated by a case study of the Ntabazinduna Reserve.

The population density of the Ntabazinduna Reserve was approximately 6.846 people per square mile in 1897.²³ This implies that the Reserve was sparsely populated before the turn of the nineteenth century. But this was not the only African area that was thinly populated towards the end of the nineteenth century. For instance both the Inyathi and Shangani Reserves were also sparsely populated. The population density of the Inyathi Reserve was roughly 1.243 people per square mile whereas that of the Shangani area was approximately 0.772 people per square mile.²⁴ According to the Bubi Native Commissioner's report there were 31.47 people living in every square mile in the Ntabazinduna Reserve by 1913.²⁵ By November 1930, the population density of the Ntabazinduna area was 84.1856 people per square mile.²⁶ This figure indicates that there were far too many people living within a small area. Since it is commonly agreed that colonial statistics were often unreliable before 1914, the above calculations should be taken as estimates whose purpose is to throw light on the socio-economic conditions in the Ntabazinduna area and other African Reserves in the first quarter of the twentieth

23. NAZ, L 2/2/117/10 Table. The population density of the Ntabazinduna Reserve has been calculated by me.

24. Ibid.

25. NAZ, N.3 24/1/2 Report on Native Reserves: Ntabazinduna Reserve, May 1913, p. 2.

26. E D Alvord, Department of Native Development, Southern Rhodesia, Occasional Paper No. 3 November, 1930: "Agricultural Demonstration Work on Native Reserves", Table No. 1.

century. According to oral sources many Africans were removed from the Insiza District to the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the period 1920 - 1928.²⁷ This happened when whites infiltrated and turned the Insiza area into commercial farms. As a result of this removal and natural accession, the population of the Ntabazinduna Reserve increased in the 1920s.

According to Alvord these African peasant farmers had only 230 ploughs in use by 1930.²⁸ This statistical evidence implies that the majority of the inhabitants of this Reserve used iron hoes in the inter-war period. The above conclusion is also supported by oral testimony.²⁹ As a result harvests were often very poor in this Reserve in the first quarter of the twentieth century. According to one informant, some African families used to reap an average of 3 buckets per acre before the arrival of an agricultural demonstrator in the Ntabazinduna area.³⁰

Grappling with the problems of low agricultural production and scarcity of food in the Ntabazinduna and other African areas, Alvord gave his demonstrators specific tasks to do. These agricultural demonstrators were frequently sons of traditional leaders. For instance one of these young men was Mbuso, the son of Mhanqwa Ndiweni who was the Chief of the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the 1920s and early 1930s.³¹ This implies that Mhanqwa and other chiefs were rich and that was why they were in a better position than their subjects to send their children to big

27. K Ndiweni, M Nyathi, Rev. Ndebele.

28. Ibid., Table No. 1.

29. MaMthethwa, 19 August 1984.

30. Nyathi 7 January 1985.

31. Ndiweni, 27 February 1984.

educational institutions. Mbuso Ndiweni completed Standard IV and was admitted to the course of Demonstrators at Tsholotsho Training Centre in the Nyamandlovu District on 1 February 1924.³² Commenting on his work, the Principal of this Industrial school wrote that Mbuso was good in the field.³³ The Agriculturalist also mentioned in one of his reports that good practical training was given to six students including Mbuso at Tsholotsho.

Despite much evidence of Mbuso's prowess and practical preparation, his reception by the peasants was not straightforward. According to Phimister's paper "the overwhelming majority of rural dwellers turned their backs on agricultural demonstration."³⁴ Mahonde agreed: "The Africans were hostile to the demonstrators generally because they had not forgotten how the white man had treated them when he expropriated their land and took away their cattle from 1893 ... and then moved them

32. NAZ, S138/206 Principal of Tjolotjo Native School to the Chief Native Commissioner, 4 February 1927 p. 1. See also NAZ, Report on Training of Demonstrators at Tjolotjo by Agriculturalist, 13 November 1926, p. 2. According to this report Mbuso's classmates were John from the Selukwe Reserve, Gavonu from the Samokwe Reserve, Lintwa from the Gwanda Reserve, Govu from the Gwaai Reserve and Joseph from the Samokwe Reserve. One defect of this report is that it does not state the surnames of the above students. And this state of affairs could easily create confusion in the minds of the readers since there were several people known as "John", "Joseph" and so forth in the 1920s, 1930s. Mbuso was taken as a person who came from the Bubi Reserve. But there was no reserve by that name. All other written and oral sources concur that Mbuso was one of the inhabitants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve, which is a part of the Bubi District.

33. Ibid., p. 1.

34. I R Phimister, "Peasant Differentiation in Southern Rhodesia 1898 - 1938". p. 12.

into the reserves".³⁵

But Alvord declared that "People showed much interest in the coming of the Demonstrator (Mbuso)."³⁶ There is neither oral nor written evidence that supports this conclusion. In fact, it could be argued that the Ntabazinduna African peasant producers like those of the Belingwe area and other reserves offered resistance to change in the field of agriculture in the years 1897 - 1930. This argument is strengthened by the fact that there was low attendance at meetings convened in the Ntabazinduna Reserve by Alvord between 1927 and 1930.

However, Mbuso appeared to have been a suitable Government agent to help Africans bring about an agricultural change in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the inter-war period. For instance, he was the right man to effect agricultural changes in this area on the grounds that he was equipped with both academic and vocational skills. Since he was brought up in the above Reserve, it is plausible to conclude that he knew the language, attitudes, capacities, problems and needs of the people he was expected to serve. In that way he was in a better position to intergrate his early experiences and the knowledge he acquired from his teachers while he was at Tsholotsho Training Centre.

But the success of the agricultural experiments he introduced in the Reserve depended to a larger degree on his ability as well as

35. C N Mahonde, 'The Role of Domboshawa Government Industrial School in African Development with particular reference to Agriculture 1920 - 1942'. University of Zimbabwe, unpub. B.A. Honours dissertation, consisting of 30 pages.

36. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner 17 May 1927, pp. 6 - 7.

willingness to direct and control the economic activities of the African Community he served.

Assessing Mbuso's achievements, the Agriculturalist pointed out that this Demonstrator had not made the progress he anticipated in May 1927.³⁷ Since this report was written six months after the Agriculturalist's visit to the Ntabazinduna Reserve, it could be argued that this was rather too early for him to assess Mbuso's achievements. Obviously, there were forces that impeded economic progress in this Reserve. One of these factors was the shortage of rainfall. Throwing more light on this conclusion, an annual report of the Department of Agriculture stated that : "In Matabeleland generally the conditions are particularly severe for cattle during winter, as grazing was poor and water supplies deficient."³⁸ The Bubi Native Commissioner also voiced that grazing and water were scarce in the Ntabazinduna Reserve and Fingo Location in 1927 and 1928. He recommended that cattle be removed from the Reserve, where the situation was becoming serious, to the Lower Bembesi.³⁹ According to one hydrographic Report the amount of rainfall in the Ntabazinduna Reserve and other parts of the Bubi District was 17.61 inches for 1927 - 1928. Since the normal rainfall was 23.32 inches per year, there was a great deficiency. As a result of this severe drought, there was scarcity of grass. In his report the Agriculturalist mentioned that the

37. NAZ, S138/72 Ntabazinduna Reserve: Progress of Native Farming Demonstrator, 24 October 1927, p. 1.

38. Meteorological Report for the year ended 30 June 1927 together with Hydrographic Report for the two years ended September 1927 (Salisbury: Government Printer 1928) p. 2; See also NAZ, S235/505 Report of the Native Commissioner for the Bubi District, 1927, p. 4.

39. NAZ, S235/521 Native Commissioner's Report on the Bubi Native Commissioner, May 1927, p. 58.

Demonstrator in the Ntabazinduna Reserve "was greatly handicapped" because African people's oxen were so thin and weak that they could no longer pull ploughs.⁴⁰ It could also be argued that Mbuso did not make good progress as expected by Alvord because the occupants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve were probably hostile to agents of agricultural change.

Although Mbuso encountered these and other difficulties, he did not give up what he had set out to do in 1927. For instance, when the Agriculturalist visited the Ntabazinduna Reserve, he found out that Mbuso had already taken over plots from four African cultivators for demonstration purposes. According to his report, all these plots were winter-ploughed by the beginning of October 1927.⁴¹ One of these plots belonged to Madhlelonyeni whose homestead was near the Chief's Kraal. The area of the plot was two acres.⁴² Since the soil was isibomvu, light red sandy loam, it was fertile. Any agricultural experiment carried out on such a piece of land was likely to be successful. The Demonstrator was instructed by the Agriculturalist to cross-plough one of these two acres in order to show clearly the advantage of winter-ploughing and cross-ploughing over winter-ploughing. A few miles due north east of the Demonstrator's homestead there was a kraal built by Ntongana. The Agriculturalist's report stated that the Demonstrator took over a one acre-plot from this man.⁴³ In this area the soil was

40. NA2, S138/72 Progress of Native Farming Demonstrator by E D Alvord, 24 October 1927, p. 58.

41. Ibid., p. 1.

42. Ibid., p. 1. See also a copy of N.R. 30: Survey and map compiled by E D Alvord, between pages 121 and 122.

43. Ibid., p. 2.

gravelly loam with a shale near the surface places.

The Demonstrator was instructed to cross-plough and manure this plot in order to show the value of such methods. At Mkhontshwana's place where the soil was isidaka again the Demonstrator worked on one acre. This plot was winter-ploughed, manured and cross-ploughed in order to make it different from the way it was dealt with before.⁴⁴ The fourth demonstration plot was at Job's place whose soil was ingqolwane, a brownish clay loam. Again, this plot was winter-ploughed by Mbuso. It was also manured.⁴⁵

The site of the above demonstration plots was well chosen on the grounds that in the same vicinity there lived African peasant farmers who still adhered to their old, agricultural methods. Since the demonstration plots were near African fields, these peasant producers could observe what Mbuso did. They could then compare their own methods of farming with the new, agricultural technology unveiled to the community by the Demonstrator. After that they could choose the better of the two agricultural technologies. Apart from winter-ploughing, cross-ploughing, manuring, the Demonstrator also harrowed his plots at least two weeks before planting time. He did this in order to demonstrate to the peasant producers that it was necessary for them to destroy all weeds before planting seeds in order to promote rapid growth of crops. Since the Agriculturalist's statements concur with those made by my informants in connection with Mbuso's economic activities in 1927, it seems that this man was a hard working Demonstrator. In addition to the above

44. Ibid. p. 2.

45. Ibid., p. 2.

agricultural experiments Mbuso was requested by the Agriculturalist to conduct another demonstration plot for the Chief of the Ntabazinduna Reserve. Alvords inténction, evidently, was to persuade the bulk of African cultivators through the example of their chief. (Whether this appeal to tribal authority would necessarily have worked is a complex issue' Alvord appears simply to have assumed that it would.)

The Demonstrator was expected to unveil the method and value of crop-rotation to the African producers as he worked on a two-acre plot at the Chief's place.⁴⁶ He was instructed to begin with a four-year crop-rotation. The two-acre plot was to be divided into four equal portions. And then, the agricultural experiment was to be carried out as illustrated in the diagrams below:⁴⁷

Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre

Season

1927 - 1928

<u>Umumbu</u>	<u>Amabele</u>	<u>Indumba</u>	<u>Umumbu</u>
mealies	kaffir	beans	mealies
heavily manured	corn		without manure
1	2	3	4

Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre

Season

1928 - 1929

<u>Umumbu</u>	<u>Umumbu</u>	<u>Amabele</u>	<u>Indumba</u>
mealies	mealies	kaffir	beans
without manure	heavily manured	corn	
1	2	3	4

46. NA2, S138/72 Progress of Native Farming Demonstrator E D Alvord, 24 October 1927 pp. 2 - 3. The name of the Chief was Bholoho Ndiweni, Senator Chief Kayisa Ndiweni's predecessor.

47. Ibid., pp. 2 - 3.

	<u>Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre</u>			
<u>Season</u>	<u>Indumba</u>	<u>Umumbu</u>	<u>Umumbu</u>	<u>Amabele</u>
1929 - 1930	beans	mealies without manure	mealies heavily manured	kaffir corn
	1	2	3	4

	<u>Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre</u>			
<u>Season</u>	<u>Amabele</u>	<u>Indumba</u>	<u>Umumbu</u>	<u>Umumbu</u>
1930 - 1931	kaffir corn	beans	mealies without manure	mealies heavily manured
	1	2	3	4

	<u>Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre Half Acre</u>			
<u>Season</u>	<u>Umumbu</u>	<u>Amabele</u>	<u>Indumba</u>	<u>Umumbu</u>
1931 - 1932	mealies heavily manured	kaffir corn	beans	mealies without manure
	1	2	3	4

The main purpose of the above crop-rotation was to unfold principles of good farming to the African producers in the Ntabazinduna Reserve. It was hoped that after these people had seen how far advantageous it was to rotate their crops they would probably follow the footsteps of their master farmer, Mbuso and hence increase their agricultural output. In this report the agriculturalist emphasized that Mbuso did considerable work on the seed selection at various kraals.⁴⁸ The Demonstrator highlighted the importance of seed selection. When the time for planting

48. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 30 October 1927, p. 2.

came, the Demonstrator and the owners of the above plots sowed their seeds in rows. But other African producers continued for some time to broadcast their seeds in the adjacent fields. Seeds germinated in both the demonstration plots and the adjacent fields. According to oral testimony the Demonstrator cultivated his plots frequently even if there were no weeds. But the owners of the adjacent lands cultivated their fields only when there were weeds.⁴⁹ Then, it remained to be seen as to which was the better of the two agricultural technologies. Obviously, those cultivators who used traditional methods had poor harvests. According to one informant the average yield was less than a bag of maize per acre in 1928.⁵⁰ It could be argued that the poor harvests were due to an excessive drought. That the drought was severe is borne out by statistical evidence. For instance, according to the Bubi Native Commissioner's report the total rainfall for the main part of 1927 - 1928 was 9.79 inches.⁵¹ But it could also equally be argued that this severe drought was not the only chief factor that contributed to the poor harvests in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the inter-war years. In one of his reports Alvord mentioned that when he took forty Africans to the demonstration plot at Madhlelonyeni's place, they were "impressed by the large healthy plants with big, fine cobs".⁵² This suggests that the plants at Madhlelonyeni's place were slightly affected by drought because Mbuso used new, scientific agricultural methods. Conservatism and rejection of these new ways of farming by the peasant producers were -----

49. M Nyathi was interviewed in the Ntabazinduna Reserve on 7 January 1985.

50. Ibid.

51. NAZ, S235/505 District Annual Report for the year ending on 31 December 1927, pp. 3.4.

52. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner on Ntabazinduna Reserve Meeting, 19 March 1928, p. 1.

certainly chief contributory factors to poor harvests and starvation in this African area.

In his report the Agriculturalist emphasized that Mbuso's work was much better than that of his counterparts in the other African reserves in Southern Rhodesia. According to his assessment Mbuso was the only Demonstrator who did proper cultivation.⁵³ Alvord's judgment was based on the fact that mealies were "nearer maturity in the Ntabazinduna area than on the most advanced plots on Selukwe Reserve".⁵⁴ Mbuso did not only stage agricultural demonstrations but he also delivered lectures on modern methods of farming. For instance, in one of his lectures he dealt with the subject of cultivation. The Agriculturalist stated in his report that he saw the peasant producers "in their fields, cultivating with hoes, not weeding but cultivating the soil".⁵⁵ This extract implies that Mbuso's message to the people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve was very clear and convincing. It was not only the Agriculturalist who felt that the Demonstrator's work was commendable but also Rev. Noble of the Presbyterian Mission. Quoting Noble, the Agriculturalist said that the former declared that he was going to discontinue with Agricultural instruction in his Mission on the grounds that Mbuso had taught the Africans more in one year practical lessons than he hoped to teach them in ten years by instruction.⁵⁶

53. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 7 February 1928, p. 1.

54. Ibid., p. 1.

55. Ibid., p. 1.

56. NAZ, S138/72 E D Alvord the Chief Native Commissioner 28 December 1928, p. 1. See S235/505 District Annual Report, 1927, pp. 3 - 5.

In his annual report the Bubi District Commissioner was echoing the achievements of Mbuso when he said that his (Demonstrator's) work was "very much appreciated by natives" in the Ntabazinduna Reserve.⁵⁷ In addition to that he pointed out that "large numbers of applications for his services were received."⁵⁸ When these official reports are checked against oral testimony, it can be established that they are in agreement.⁵⁹ Therefore it is plausible to conclude that Mbuso Ndiweni did an excellent job as an agricultural demonstrator in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in 1927 - 1928.

In his thesis Gert van Vulpen suggests that in every African reserve the cultivators could be divided into two main groups in Southern Rhodesia during the inter-war years. One of these groups was that of plotheolders.⁶⁰ This group of people was expected to supply oxen for ploughing and give any other assistance required by the agricultural demonstrator. Then the demonstrator, using modern, agricultural techniques, worked on the lands belonging to the above group. But the agricultural produce from these plots was given to the owners of the fields. The second group of people consisted of men who had an interest in the methods used by the Demonstrator. The members of this group did not give the Demonstrator their lands, oxen and other help. They observed the Demonstrator's agricultural experiments and tried to

57. NAZ, S235/505 District Annual Report, 1927, p. 4.

58. Ibid., p. 4.

59. A Khumalo and K Ndiweni were interviewed at their homes in the Ntabazinduna area on 18 December 1983 and 27 February 1984 respectively.

60. Gert van Vulpen, "The Political Economy of the African Peasant Agriculture in Marondera District 1930 - 1950", Amsterdam, unpub. Phd thesis 1982/83, p. 26.

implement the new techniques on their lands. These people were called cooperators.⁶¹ But it is rather strange that his thesis does not mention the third group of African peasant farmers. And yet this class appears to have been the largest of the three. It consisted of peasant producers who were neither the plotheolders whose lands were taken over by the demonstrators nor cooperators. In the case of the Ntabazinduna Reserve there were already three groups of peasant farmers by 1929. For instance, according to one of the Agriculturist's reports, Mbuso worked on eight demonstration plots in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the season 1928 - 1929. These plots were stumped, winter-ploughed, cross-ploughed and manured. This implies that there was a small number of plotheolders in the Reserve. Above that the Agricultural Demonstrator had thirteen African peasant farmers lined up as cooperators on their lands.⁶²

This second group of African peasant producers was bigger than that of the plotheolders. In the light of the fact that the Ntabazinduna area was already densely populated by 1929 it is plausible to conclude that the number of cooperators was very small. These figures show that the largest group of the peasant farmers consisted of people who were neither the plotheolders nor cooperators. This was the group that did not emulate Mbuso's agricultural experiments.

Despite the efforts made by Mbuso, the level of acceptability of his message remained limited. However, his performance in the field of agriculture was undoubtedly better than that of his counterparts who -----

61. Ibid., p. 26.

62. Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the year 1928, Chart B. p. 21. See also S138/72 E D Alvord to the Annual report to the Chief Native Commissioner, 28 December 1928, p. 1.

were stationed particularly in the Gwanda, Belingwe, Mutema and Chibi areas. According to some statistical evidence the agricultural demonstrators working in these areas had no cooperators in the season 1928 - 1929.⁶³ And this suggests that African cultivators in these areas were more hostile to demonstrators than those peasants who lived in the Ntabazinduna Reserve.

The agriculturalist and the Bubi District Commissioner continued to assess the Demonstrator's work. According to their assessment Mbuso's achievements were remarkable. For instance, in his annual report the Chief Native Commissioner declared, "The Demonstration plots on Ntabazinduna, Semokwe, Victoria, Chikwakwa, Mangwendi and Chiduku Reserves are better this year than during the two previous years".⁶⁴ That Mbuso made progress in the late 1920s is borne out by statistical evidence. It would be remembered that at the end of the season 1927 - 1928 the average yields in bags of maize per acre on his demonstration plots was 3.7. At the end of the season 1929 - 1930 the average yield in bags of maize per acre on his demonstration plots was 5.7. This means that the average yield in bags of maize on his plots increased by 54.05%. His best plot gave him 6.6 bags of maize at the end of 1927 - 1928. One of Agriculturalist's papers alleges that some of Mbuso's "demonstration plots yielded over 20 bags of maize to the acre."⁶⁵

63. Ibid., Chart B. p. 21.

64. Report of the Directors of Native Development for the year 1929, p. 83.

65. E D Alvord, Department of Native Development, Occasional Paper No. 3, "Agricultural Demonstrators in Native Reserves" November 1930, p. 28.

According to these reports that are also supported by oral testimony Mbuso Ndiweni continued to do commendable work as a conscientious agricultural demonstrator in the period 1927 - 1934. As he worked on his plots day by day, he unveiled to the African peasant producers those techniques that could help them increase their agricultural output and improve the quality of their livestock. Since he was undoubtedly a great pioneer in the province of African peasant agriculture in the Ntabazinduna Reserve between the two World Wars, it is reasonable to assume that his contemporaries will never forget the light that he brought to this area under the chieftainship of Bhuloho Ndiweni and his successors.

Mbuso's successor was Mabhada Maphosa. While Mabhada was not a son of the Chief of the Ntabazinduna area, he was a son of a headman. Mabhada trained as agricultural demonstrator at Tsholotsho Industrial School. The written sources which I have consulted have said very little about his economic activities in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the years 1935 - 1939. In his reports the Bubi District Commissioner stated that the Native Demonstrator did very well in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the period 1935 - 1939. In one of these reports he alleged that by degrees his (Mabhada's) Agricultural methods were being adopted "with most encouraging results."⁶⁶ The report, however, is not specific and it does not identify the new agricultural techniques that were adopted and implemented by the African peasant producers in the Reserve. Furthermore, the District Commissioner did not explain what he meant by the phrase "with most encouraging results".

66. NAZ, S235/513 Report of the Native Commissioner, Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1935, p. 4.

Apart from the District Commissioner's sketchy reports, oral testimony emphasized that Mabhada did a splendid piece of work in the years 1935 - 1939. For instance, according to one informant, Mabhada's performance was so good that some of the people who followed his footsteps used to reap ten bags of maize from an acre.⁶⁷ But this informant was unable to cite the names and groups of people who adopted and carried out Mabhada's agricultural experiments. He could not even state the number of people who increased their agricultural production after Mabhada had staged his demonstration lessons in the Ntabazinduna Reserve. Although written sources do not say much about his economic activities in the Ntabazinduna Reserve, several informants concur that he was a hard, devoted worker like his predecessor.⁶⁸ Both Mbuso and Mabhada helped the peasant producers to bring about agricultural change in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the inter-war period. The next chapter will throw more light on these men's achievements.

67. M Nyathi was interviewed at his home in the Ntabazinduna Reserve, on 7 January 1985.

68. K Ndiweni, M Nyathi, M Khumalo, Rev. Ndebele and M Nxumalo were interviewed in the Ntabazinduna Reserve at different times.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESPONSES OF THE PEASANT FARMERS TO THE ECONOMIC

ACTIVITIES OF THE AGRICULTURALIST FOR INSTRUCTION OF

NATIVES AND HIS DEMONSTRATOR IN THE NTABAZINDUNA RESERVE

BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

Chapters five and six of this dissertation have tried to provide a balanced, comprehensive account of the main economic activities of the Agriculturalist and his Demonstrator in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the period 1927 - 1939.

In an assessment made in 1962, Kona declared: "Agricultural Service started some thirty years ago by Alvord has failed to raise the African Purchase Area or Reserve above a subsistence economy."¹ Is he correct in implying that Alvord's agricultural experiments carried out by his demonstrators in African areas including the Ntabazinduna Reserve were a fruitless exercise?

Explaining why he believed that the experiments were unsuccessful, Kona said, "Demonstrators resorted to intimidation and dictatorship and thus

1. W H Kona, "The Human Factor in Rural Development in the Federation: The Impact of Historical events on the African People of Southern Rhodesia", Memorandum Agriculture: Agricultural Union, Seminar Papers, 1962, Salisbury, 28 February - 1 March 1962, p.6

drove away the cooperation they needed from the people."² This dissertation challenges Kona's conclusions, which are - in any case - not clearly supported by evidence. Use has been made here of both oral and written sources not used by Kona.

Gert van Vulpen's reasons for the failures of Alvord's agricultural experiments are different from those stated by Kona. In his doctoral thesis van Vulpen emphasized that "Lack of marketing facilities, price regulations, lack of agricultural demonstrators and difficulties with the supply of manure, all contributed to the failure of the demonstration work."³ In their article Leys and Ross gave rather a different kind of explanation for the poor responses by Africans to the colonial Government economic policy. They argued, "Government is not their government. In their (the Africans') view everything it does, the tax, labour regulations and all else, is done for the benefit of Europeans".⁴

But in "The Gospel of the Plow" Alvord was citing a different reason for poor African cultivators' responses to the agricultural demonstration work when he said, "All over the country (Southern Rhodesia) natives asked with wisdom: What is the use of adopting better methods and

2. Ibid., p. 6. See also P Mosley, "Agricultural Development and Government Policy in Settler Economies: The Case of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1900 - 1960", Economic History Review, 35, 1982, p. 397.

3. Gert van Vulpen, "The Political Economy of the African Peasant Agriculture in the Marondera District, 1930 - 1950", p. 34.

4. D Birmingham et al "White presence and power in Africa: The Colonial State in Kenya, 1885 - 1914", The Journal of African History, vol. 20; No. 4, 1979 p. 492.

producing more crops, when there is no market?"⁵ Ranger's claim that "African cultivators were everywhere anxious and able to respond to early market opportunity" overlooks regional obstacles to such responses.⁶ For instance, in the case of the Ntabazinduna Reserve, there is no adequate oral or written evidence to suggest that sufficient market opportunities existed to meet the needs of the local African population in the early colonial days. According to oral testimony only one small store with a narrow range of goods existed in this Reserve during the colonial era.⁷ One informant alleged that commodities such as sweets and sugar were freely given to those African who sneaked around the store building.⁸ It could be argued that this was done in order to stimulate peasant producers' interest in purchasing goods from the store. The main purpose of this chapter is to assess the responses of the African producers to the western, agricultural technology in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the periods 1920 - 1926; 1927 - 1930; 1930 - 1934 and 1935 - 1939.

There was no agricultural demonstrator stationed in this Reserve before 1927. As a result, the majority of the African peasant farmers used their own agricultural methods during the first period. The iron hoe was still used as the chief agricultural implement. In his annual report for the years 1923, 1924, 1925 and 1926 the Native Commissioner in charge of the Bubi District emphasized that Africans had not made improvements in

5. NAZ, Alvord, "The Gospel of the Plow", unnumbered pages.

6. T Ranger. 'Growing from the Roots: Reflection on Peasant Research in Central and Southern Africa', Journal of Southern African Studies, (5) 1, 1978, p. 99

7. Khumalo, Nyathi, Ndiweni; DOTB Map NR 30: "Ntabazinduna Reserve".

8. Ndiweni.

the province of agriculture.⁹ As a result, harvests in the Ntabazinduna, Inyathi and the Shangani Reserves were generally poor before 1927.

In his PhD thesis, Steele maintains the view that hoeing was the preserve for African women while ploughing was men's duty.¹⁰ Thomas also stated in his reports that it was a woman's duty to break the ground.¹¹

No historian disputes the fact that there was a division of labour particularly among the Ndebele or Shona during the colonial days. But Farrer seemed to brush aside the idea of the division of labour when he told chiefs and headmen that the African agricultural production was lower than that of the Europeans because "they left their ploughing and cultivating to their women and children who had not learned from the white man how to do it properly like you have".¹²

The idea that ploughing was solely done by women in the Inyathi, Ntabazinduna and Shangani Reserves is open to question on the grounds that it is not supported by oral and other written sources which I have -----

9. Report of the Native Commissioner, Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1923, p. 244; NAZ, S235/502 Report of the Native Commissioner, Bubi District, 1924, p.2.
10. Murray Cairns Steele, "The Foundations of a Native Policy in Southern Rhodesia, 1923 - 1933", Simon Fraser University, unpub. PhD thesis, 1972, p. 362.
11. M G Reid, "The early Agriculture of Matabeleland and Mashonaland", Rhodesia Agriculture Journal, 77 vols. 73 - 74, 1976, p. 98. M G Reid was a Provincial Agricultural Officer stationed in Gwelo, now called 'Gweru', during the Colonial days.
12. NAZ, S1561/10 vol. 7 Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen, Inyathi, 22 June 1925, p. 2. This report was compiled by Farrer, the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District. The meeting was attended by 44 Kraalheads, Chiefs and Headman from the above Reserves.

consulted. The above Native Commissioner argued forcefully that unlike the African cultivators the white commercial farmers cultivated more particularly in a drought season and reaped a little. He alleged that Africans "reaped nothing when there was drought because they did not cultivate their crops."¹³ It was not only the Bubi Native Commissioner who urged the Africans to cultivate their crops in order to increase agricultural production in the Reserves but also the Agriculturalist. As far as the Agriculturalist was concerned cultivation was as important as application of manure.¹⁴ Strengthening his argument he outlined the yields of four demonstration plots planted to maize. In accordance with one of his reports the first plot was neither manured nor cultivated. It was only weeded as the occupants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve used to do before 1927.

The yield per acre was four and a half bags of maize.¹⁵ The second plot unlike the first one was "well cultivated frequently". According to the report the yield per acre was seventeen and a half bags of maize.¹⁶ The yield per acre of the third plot which was weeded and manured was eighteen bags of maize.¹⁷ Adding more weight to this conclusion one oral source says that four trained agricultural demonstrators who used manure

13. Ibid., p. 2.

14. NAZ, S 138/72 Ntabazinduna Reserve; No. 5746 E D Alvord's Circular Letter No. D.C./3 E D Alvord in Salisbury, to the Chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury, 21 December 1927.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

obtained twenty-one bags of maize per acre in the African reserves.¹⁸

According to the above informant Africans "knew nothing about planting in rows and about the application of manure."¹⁹ Another informant said that the inhabitants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve had a lot of Kraal manure particularly before 1927. He stressed that these people did not use it because they did not know its value.²⁰ This again helps to explain why agricultural production was low in the Reserve in the 1920s. The last plot "was manured and well cultivated frequently".²¹ And the results were very good. The yield per acre was thirty-two bags of maize.²² Obviously, this last plot was 7.11 times better than the first one which was neither cultivated nor manured. In the light of the above statistical evidence it is plausible to conclude that the use of manure was as important as cultivation.

In his paper Weinmann was emphasizing the poor quality of seeds sowed by African peasant producers in their fields when he concluded, "Maize was an established crop amongst the natives of Rhodesia at the time of occupation, a deteriorated, low yielding, but hardy type of round maize being grown".²³ In his view this type of maize "was well suited to the

18. NAZ, AOH/41 M S Chibvongodze was interviewed by Dawson Munjeri at Farm No. 4. Muda Purchase Area, 14 July 1978, pp. 19 - 21. M S Chibvongodze trained as an agricultural demonstrator at Domboshawa in 1929.

19. Ibid., p. 21.

20. M Nyathi.

21. NAZ, S138/72 Circular Letter No. D.C./3: E D Alvord in Salisbury to the Chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury, 21 Decmeber 1927.

22. Ibid.

23. Weinmann, Occasional Paper No. 4 1972, p. 17.

primitive conditions of native cultivation, in which as a rule a mixture of different crops such as maize, kaffir corn, pearl millet, groundnuts, beans and other crops were sowed in the same field".²⁴ These quotations suggest that the traditional maize and methods used by Africans in colonial times contributed to low crop-production particularly in the Ntabazinduna area and other reserves.

Throwing light on the agricultural methods used in the reserves in the Bubi area at that time, the Native Commissioner pointed out that the African peasant farmers did not rotate their crops. Again he was accounting for low agricultural production in the reserves when he said, "this soil gets tired of growing the same crop every year".²⁵ The fact that the African cultivators did not make use of the above and other related techniques in the Ntabazinduna area and other reserves before 1927 should not be taken as a clear demonstration of their ignorance in the province of new, western agricultural technology. In the view of the Bubi Native Commissioner all labour on European, commercial farms was done by African men throughout Southern Rhodesia.²⁶ This conclusion is not only supported by written data but also by oral testimony.²⁷ For these African men experience was their best teacher. Both oral and written sources make it abundantly clear that some of these Africans shifted from white, commercial farms in the Insiza District to the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the 1920s. Oral evidence also indicates that some of the Africans worked on the European farms surrounding the

24. Ibid., p. 17.

25. NAZ, S1561/10 vol. 7. Report of the Native Commissioner, Inyathi, 1925, p. 5.

26. Ibid., p. 1.

27. Ndiweni, Tshuma.

Reserve.²⁸ Despite the absence of detailed evidence, it seems natural to assume that they made use of skills learned while working on farms owned by whites. Addressing kraalheads, headmen and chiefs from the three reserves in the Bubi District, the Native Commissioner stated that harvests were frequently poor in the above area because African men were lazy.²⁹ But the first page of this report gives the readers the impression that African men were hard workers when Farrer declared, "All the work on the farms in Rhodesia is performed by your people".³⁰ It seems he was contradicting himself when he alleged that African men were lazy. Therefore this allegation which has not been substantiated should not be taken seriously. In fact it could be argued that as a result of black mens' hard work, the white settler community made a giant stride forward in the economic sector in Southern Rhodesia during the colonial period. It was not only in the field of crop-production in which the African peasant cultivators failed to compete with the white farmers but also in the province of stock-breeding. For instance, in the period 1920 - 1926 the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District pointed out in his annual reports that Africans did not make any serious effort to improve the breed of their cattle.³¹ In his article Nobbs mentioned the types of cattle the Ndebele possessed in the pre-colonial days. These cattle included the Zulu types; imofu, red, heavy Dutch beasts

28. F Tshuma.

29. NAZ, S1561/10, vol. 7. Report by the Native Commissioner on Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi on 22 June 1925, p. 2.

30. Ibid. p. 1

31. NAZ, S235/501 Report of the NC, Bubi District, 31 December 1923, p. 296. NAZ, S235/502 Report of the NC, Bubi District, 31 December 1924, p. 3. NAZ, S235/503 Report of the NC, Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1925, p. 4; NAZ, S235/504 Report of the Native Commissioner, Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1926, p. 4.

with small horns; amabula, red, Dutch animals with white faces and long horns; Tswana cattle and amanjaja, Shona scrub breed.³² These and other African cattle were inferior to those which belonged to the European farmers during the colonial days. But one informant rejected this conclusion when he argued that the occupants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve bought cattle from the white settlers and reared them.³³ There is neither oral nor written evidence that suggests that the European cattle formed the foundation stock in the above Reserve in the 1920s and 1930s.

In fact the African producers were interested in quantity rather than quality. In the period 1913 - 1930, the number of their cattle increased by 190%. Since the area set aside as grazing land was approximately 7 000 acres, the Ntabazinduna area was overstocked. But these producers were not prepared in principle either to destock or improve the quality of their livestock in the years 1897 - 1926. The African cultivators probably feared that the white people would take away the peasant cattle as the B.S.A.Co. did soon after the fall of Lobhengula.

In the light of the situation that prevailed in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the period 1897 - 1926 it could be concluded that African peasant farmers did not make great progress in the fields of crop-production and stock-breeding.

But the year 1927 was a landmark in the development of the agricultural history of the Ntabazinduna Reserve. It will be remembered that in this

32. E A Nobbs, "The Native Cattle of Southern Rhodesia", South African Journal and Monopolies": "Beef Cattle in Southern Rhodesia 1890 - 1938", Journal of African History, XIX, 3(1978) p. 396.

33. M Nyathi.

year Alvord and his Demonstrator, Mbuso Ndiweni started their agricultural experiments in the Reserve. This move was designed to bring about a meaningful agricultural change in the area. As a faithful servant of his colonial masters Mbuso was expected to bring home to his people by precept and example the advantages of intensive cultivation.

In the years 1927 - 1930 the number of African peasant farmers who attended Alvord's 'Lantern Lectures' in the Ntabazinduna Reserve ranged from sixty to three hundred men. This statistical evidence indicates beyond any reasonable doubt that the majority of the occupants of this Reserve were reluctant to change their own ways of farming. They were probably suspicious of the intentions of the Government's agents of agricultural change. The African cultivators might have feared that once they accepted intensive cultivation some of their lands would probably be confiscated by the Colonial Government.

Despite the poor attendance at the above meetings the Agriculturalist wrote that his lectures "were attended by large numbers of people who listened attentively and earnestly".³⁴ In addition to that he emphasized that "a number of natives winter-ploughed and manured their lands".³⁵ A defect of this report lies in the fact that it does not state the number of African peasant producers who also winter-ploughed and manured their fields in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in 1928. It could be argued that Alvord wrote the words in quotation marks in order to create in the minds of the Chief Native Commissioner and other officials the impression that African cultivators accepted agricultural change. And if

34. NAZ, S235/506 Report of the Native Commissioner, Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1928, p. 5.

35. Ibid., p. 5.

they did, it could be thought that Alvord had achieved his goals. This conclusion is also supported by Alvord's statement that read, "Crops improved wonderfully" in the Ntabazinduna Reserve.³⁶ Again this quotation sounds vague on the grounds that it does not tell the reader the number of bags of maize that were reaped by the inhabitants of the Reserve in 1927 and 1928. When a reader is given this information only, he is likely to find it difficult to compare the harvests of 1927 - 1928 with those of the previous years.

In his letter to the Secretary to the Prime Minister the Chief Native Commissioner stated that he learnt "with much interest the competition between the Demonstrator (Mbuso) and the four natives in the Ntabazinduna Reserve mentioned by Mr Alvord".³⁷

According to Alvord's report one of the four men "ploughed, manured and planted in exactly the same way as did Mbuso".³⁸ Although this peasant farmer put a lot of effort into his work, he found out that the Demonstrator's plot was still much better than his. He attributed the Demonstrator's success to the use of isikofolo, the "machine cultivator".³⁹ As a result this man showed a keen interest in buying a cultivator. The agriculturalist alleged that the other three men who competed with the Demonstrator said that they had nothing to learn from

36. Alvord, Occasional Paper No. 3, November 1930, p. 28.

37. NA2, S138/72 Chief Native Commissioner to the Secretary to the premier, 9 February 1928: "On Demonstration Work: Ntabazinduna and Semokwe Reserves".

38. NA2, S138/72 Alvord to the Chief Native Commissioner, 7 February 1928, p. 1.

39. Ibid., p. 1.

Mbuso.⁴⁰ This implies that they adopted and implemented Mbuso's agricultural methods. But again Mbuso won the race.

All the oral sources that I have consulted do not give the impression that there were men who competed with the Demonstrator in the province of agriculture in the Ntabazinduna Reserve between the two World Wars.

A defect of the above reports is that competitors' names are not mentioned. Another weakness of these reports is that they do not explain why the four men decided to compete with Mbuso, the master farmer. However, these reports throw some light on the responses of the African peasants to the economic activities of the Agriculturalist and the Demonstrator. The competition between the four men, and the Demonstrator shows that African people did not respond to Mbuso's agricultural experiments as a big group but as individuals. This argument is strengthened by the fact that the number of cooperators was thirteen in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in 1927.⁴¹ By 1930 the number of cooperators was 26.⁴² This means that the number of cooperators doubled itself in a period of three years. These figures suggest that perhaps a few rich men emulated Mbuso's agricultural experiments in the period 1927 - 1934. These might have been a few African men who possessed large herds of cattle and could afford to buy agricultural implements from white traders.

40. Ibid., p.1.

41. NAZ, S138/72 Alvord to the CNC, 28 February 1928, p. 1. See also NAZ, S323/16891 Report of the CNC for the year 1928, Chart B. p. 8.

42. NAZ, S323/16891 Report of the CNC for the year 1928, p. 8.

But the Native Commissioner's report emphasized that he noticed that there was improvement in methods of agriculture in 1931. Adding details to his general statement, he said, "European white seed maize is almost universally used."⁴³ This quotation implies that this type of maize seed was not commonly used in the Ntabazinduna Reserve before 1927. In 1931 he noticed improvements particularly in methods and class of grain in the Reserve.⁴⁴ Again this conclusion suggests that many people rather than a handful changed their old ways of farming. He also declared, "Superior quality of grain is universally sown and has replaced Kaffir corn as the staple food crop."⁴⁵ The conclusion that Kaffir corn used to be the staple food crop in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the 1920s is confirmed by oral testimony.⁴⁶ It is believed that mealie meal was not widely used in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the 1920s. The peasant farmers' responses to the new agricultural technology went beyond the small numbers of cooperators: "Through his efforts (Mbuso's efforts) the majority of the natives have been persuaded to stump their lands and plough them properly."⁴⁷ The Native Commissioner also said that the results were remarkable on the grounds that the African cultivators winter-ploughed and manured their fields.⁴⁸

43. NAZ, S235/508 Report of the Bubi NC for the year ended 31 December 1930, pp. 2 - 3.

44. NAZ, S235/509 Report of the Bubi NC, 1931, p. 2.

45. Ibid., p. 2.

46. M. Nyathi.

47. NAZ, S235/509 Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1931, p. 2.

48. Ibid., p. 2.

We are left unclear as to the precise number of people who implemented the above agricultural methods in the 1930s. If the reports had furnished the reading audience with adequate, statistical evidence, it would probably have been much easier for historians to conclude whether peasants responded to Mbuso's economic activities as a whole or as individuals. In his annual report of 1932 the Native Commissioner asserted that there were "improvements in methods of cultivation in all directions".⁴⁹ He went on to say that people planted maize in rows.⁵⁰ This suggests that the African producers had learnt that the advantages of broadcasting seeds were outweighed by the disadvantages.

Above that the report also stated that "Several Natives have bought harrows, cultivators and planters".⁵¹ These implements were possessed by the few people with many cattle. These agricultural implements were not used by African producers in the Reserve before the arrival of the Demonstrator in the Reserve.⁵² Again, there is no detailed evidence of the number of people who purchased these agricultural implements. In one of his papers Alvord mentioned that there were 230 ploughs in the Ntabazinduna Reserve by 1930.⁵³ The people of the Inyathi Reserve had 60 ploughs.⁵⁴ This paper does not cite figures for other agricultural implements such as harrows, planters and cultivators which were

49. NAZ, S235/510 Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1932, p. 3.

50. Ibid., pp. 3 - 4.

51. Ibid., pp. 3 - 4.

52. NAZ, AOH/41 M S Chibvongodze was interviewed by D Munjeri at Farm No. 4 Muda Purchase Area, 14 July 1978, pp. 22 - 33.

53. E D Alvord, "Agricultural Demonstration Work on Native Reserves" Occasional Paper No. 3 November 1930, pp. 6 - 9.

54. Ibid., Table 1.

purchased and used in the Ntabazinduna area in the inter-war period.

The above figures indicate that less than ten per cent of the African cultivators had ploughs in this Reserve by 1930. Again, this statistical evidence implies that the majority of the African population in this area were poor and could not afford to buy ploughs. They did not have many cattle and they continued to use the traditional hoe as their agricultural tool. Although this was so, it is evident that the economic activities of Mbuso, Alvord and Mabhada were not a fruitless exercise. For instance, at the end of the season 1927 - 1928 the recorded average yield on lands owned by peasant who continued to use old agricultural methods in the Reserve was 0.8 bag per acre.⁵⁵ But in 1930 2 000 acres of land were brought under cultivation by the Africans in the same area. At the end of the season 4 050 bags of grain were reaped.⁵⁶ This implies that the average yield per acre was 2.02 bags whereas in the Lundi it was 1.9 bags per acre.⁵⁷ In the light of the above and other statistical evidence the Agriculturalist described the people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve as 'progressive' in the 1930s.⁵⁸

In the period 1934 - 1939 the peasant farmers seemed to show a keen interest in the Demonstrator's economic activities. In one of his reports the Agriculturalist emphasized that winter-ploughing was "practiced extensively" in the Reserve.⁵⁹ As a result of the adoption of

55. NAZ, S138/72 Chart A.

56. NAZ, Table No. 1, "Agricultural Status of Reserve Natives".

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. NAZ, S235/513 Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1935, p. 3.

Mabhada's agricultural methods there was a good harvest at the end of the season, 1934 - 1935. He alleged that "maize of good quality was being produced".⁶⁰ Again, he said that "excellent crops were reaped" and "Kaffir corn harvest was bountiful".⁶¹ He did not provide exact figures in connection with acreage under cultivation and numbers of bags of grain reaped in that year. Therefore Alvord's remarks were rather general.

Although the African peasant producers showed a few signs of improvement in the field of agriculture, they did not make an effort to improve the quality of their cattle and other livestock between the two World Wars. Farrer urged the inhabitants of the Ntabazinduna, Inyathi and Shangani Reserves to breed better cattle in 1925. He suggested that they buy better bulls. Furthermore, he persuaded them to castrate all their bulls which were inferior to those of the white commercial farmers.⁶²

In response to this appeal Chief Sikobokobo Nxumalo from the Shangani Reserve said that he did not think that traders would give them (Africans) more money for "better class cattle".⁶³ This quotation suggests that there was no strong incentive for the African peasant producers to improve the quality of their cattle in the Inyathi, the Ntabazinduna and Shangani Reserves, particularly in the 1920's. The prices for African cattle which were obviously inferior to those of the

60. Ibid., pp. 3 - 4.

61. NAZ, S235/515 Report of the Native Commissioner Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1936, pp. 3 - 5.

62. NAZ, S1561/10 vol. 7, Meeting of Chiefs and Headmen at Inyathi on 22 June 1925, pp. 1 - 6.

63. Ibid., p. 7.

white commercial farmers were undoubtedly very low in the 1920's. Kosmin was reinforcing this conclusion when he said:

"The cattle and hide trade was still Jewish dominated from the itinerant cattle buyers in the Reserves like the Greenspan brothers up to the exporters and processors. Max and Louis Greenspan bought cattle for 7s 6d a head in the Filabusi area in 1923 but could not find a buyer in Bulawayo even at this price."⁶⁴

After the completion of his training at Tsholotsho Industrial School, Mbuso tried to show his people how to improve the quality of their cattle. For instance according to one written source, he made 520 castrations in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in 1928.⁶⁵ But all these and other efforts he made appear to have been a fruitless exercise. Confirming this conclusion in his report written in 1933, the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District declared, "Natives still cherish the idea that cattle mean wealth and no effort is made to reduce or weed out the unsaleable type of animal."⁶⁶ In the reports covering the period 1934 - 1939, the Native Commissioner of the Bubi District emphasized that there was no improvement in the class of African cattle.⁶⁷ This conclusion is also borne out by oral testimony.⁶⁸

64. B A Kosmin, Majuta: A History of the Jewish Community in Zimbabwe (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1980) pp. 60 - 61.

65. NAZ, S323/16891 Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the year 1928, p. 8.

66. NAZ, S235/511 Report of the Native Commissioner, Bubi District for the year ended 31 December 1933, p. 4.

67. NAZ, S235/513 Report of the Bubi Native Commissioner, 1935, p. 6.
NAZ, S235/515 Report of the Bubi Native Commissioner, 1936,
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68. Ndiweni, M Nyathi, F Tshuma.

In the light of oral testimony and written evidence which I have consulted it could be concluded that the vast majority of the African peasant producers resisted change particularly in the fields of animal husbandry and crop-production in the Ntabazinduna Reserve between the two World Wars. Conservatism and a hostile attitude adopted by the African population towards the Colonial Government seemed to have been the chief obstacles that retarded economic progress in the Ntabazinduna area and other reserves. Although a small group of men welcomed agricultural change, it is clear that the above and other related forces at work, frustrated the ambitions and expectations of the agents of change during the colonial period, 1923 - 1939.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has achieved several goals. In the first place, it has established the fact that the vast majority of the African peasant producers did not make 'noticeable improvements in the methods of agriculture' in the Ntabazinduna, Inyathi and the Shangani Reserves in the years 1897 - 1926. Oral testimony and written evidence concur that most occupants of the Ntabazinduna Reserve used the traditional iron hoe as their main agricultural equipment for breaking the ground, as late as 1926. Instead of sowing their seeds in rows as done on European commercial farms surrounding the Reserve, the African cultivators used to broadcast them. As a result their crops were often overcrowded and thin. Since the peasant farmers neither manured their fields nor practiced crop-rotation, the soil was impoverished. Poor tillage was undoubtedly one of the chief factors that contributed to a low agricultural output in the Ntabazinduna Reserve before 1927. Confirming this conclusion, several informants stated that many Africans used to reap a few buckets of grain per acre in this Reserve during the first quarter of the twentieth century. But according to Palmer's Table III the annual, average yield per acre on European farms ranged from 3.08 to 6.80 bags of maize between 1913 and 1926.¹ It could be argued that this higher agricultural production per acre was due to the fact that these white areas were usually more fertile than the African reserves. Another chief reason for better yields on these farms than in the reserves was that the white producers used new scientific agricultural methods.

1. R Palmer, Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia, Table III. See also Weinmann, Occasional Paper 4, 1972, p. 40.

Secondly, this thesis considers 1927 as a turning-point in the development of the agricultural history of the Ntabazinduna Reserve. Before 1927 the Settler Government did not intervene in the province of African agriculture in this area. But as from 1927 the Colonial State, through its agents of change including the Agriculturalist for Instruction of Natives, the African Demonstrator and the Native Commissioner, began to play an active role in the development of African agriculture for various reasons.

Thirdly, this work has tried to show that the African peasant producers' responses to the agricultural experiments carried out by the agents of change were mixed. They were never as uniform as Alvord claimed: he alleged that there were "improvements in methods of cultivation in all directions" in the period 1928 - 1939. This sweeping claim hardly accords with the available evidence.

Statistical evidence (with all its limitations for this period) suggests that very few African cultivators welcomed agricultural change in the Ntabazinduna Reserve. These were perhaps the rich ones who could buy new agricultural implements. For instance, in 1930 there were 230 ploughs in use in the Ntabazinduna Reserve as has already been mentioned in the previous chapters. Since the African population of this area was 3 485 by 1939, it is right to conclude that the majority of the inhabitants of the Reserve had no ploughs, harrows, planters and cultivators.² In addition to that, Alvord's reports mention that only four African peasant farmers presumably members of a small number of wealthier men, tried hard to compete with Mbuso, the Demonstrator, in the agrarian

2. NAZ, S235/517 Bubi, Native Commissioner's report for the year 1929, p. 1.

sector. Besides that, the number of cooperators was small in the sense that it ranged from 13 to 26 in this Reserve in the years 1927 - 1930. Again, these figures show clearly that the vast majority of the African peasant producers were poor and unable to buy ploughs, harrows as well as cultivators. As a result, agricultural methods remained little changed. The other strong reason why most African peasant producers resisted change in the province of agriculture was that they were often suspicious of the underlying motives of the White Settler Government.

This thesis rejects the hyperbole of the "Underdevelopment" School that "the agricultural economy of the Shona and the Ndebele had been destroyed" by the Settler Government policies in the first forty years of the twentieth century. The picture in the Ntabazinduna Reserve is essentially one of survival by the majority, with clear-cut responses by a small minority.

Fourthly, this thesis has unveiled to the reader some of the defects of the oral and written sources dealing with the subject of agricultural change in Southern Rhodesia's colonial past.

For instance, the reports which were compiled by the Agriculturalist, the Chief Native Commissioner and the Bubi Native Commissioner with regard to African reserves from time to time, lack essential details such as exact names of prominent black producers who responded positively to the Demonstrator's agricultural experiments, numbers of people who rejected or accepted the modern agricultural methods and those of bags of maize as well as other grain(s) that were reaped by cultivators at the end of every summer season. These sources do not even divide the African cultivators into various classes, such as the rich, the average and the poor.

It is unfortunate that Mbuso and Mabhada did not leave behind their own written records, throwing light on their demonstration work in the Ntabazinduna Reserve between 1927 and 1939.

Statements that were made by African informants were also of a general nature. Individual's memories do not normally yield to statistics pertaining to African population, harvest, livestock, agricultural implements, acreage and so forth in the Reserve year after year.

Although these consulted sources could not possibly answer all questions the reader might have in mind, they have at least tried to shed light on the subject of agricultural change in the Ntabazinduna Reserve during the colonial period. Obviously, most of these oral and written sources concur that there was no large scale agricultural change in the Ntabazinduna Reserve in the years 1923 - 1939.

Therefore it is hoped that this case-study will stimulate scholars' interest in the field of African agricultural past in Southern Rhodesia in the first half of the twentieth century. As scholars delve into the agricultural history of every African reserve in Southern Rhodesia, it would probably be possible for modern historians to compare and contrast these findings. In that way historians might be in a better position to make sound conclusions with regard to the issue of the totality of the past of Rhodesia's African agricultural change in the first fifty years of the twentieth century. In that way this case-study of the Ntabazinduna Reserve, like other similar local studies, has contributed in a small way to the advancement of historical knowledge.

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Oral/Col, Lillian Condry whose father was NC, Matobo District interviewed at Cliveden Close Highlands, Salisbury by D Hartridge, 18 and 28 February 1969.

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- MaMthethwa, interviewed at her home near the Ngwenya River in the Ntabazinduna Reserve, 19 August 1984.
- Ndebele, Rev, interviewed at Ingwenya Mission, Ntabazinduna Reserve, 14 July 1986.
- Ndiweni, K, the Chief of the Ntabazinduna Reserve, Vice President of the Zimbabwe Senate interviewed at his residence, 18 December 1983.
- Ngamakazi, M, interviewed at his home, Jabulani Line, Ntabazinduna Reserve, June 1984.
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APPENDIX 1
QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE
AGRICULTURAL HISTORY OF THE NTABAZINDUNA RESERVE:

I Informant's historical background:

- a) Interviewee's name:
 - b) Interviewee's date of birth: / / 19....
 - c) Interviewee's place of birth:
 - d) Interviewee's academic
qualification(s):
 - e) Interviewee's professional
qualification(s):
 - f) School(s) attended:
.....
 - g) Occupation(s):
.....
 - h) Place of abode since birth:
.....
-

II Historical background of the Ntabazinduna Reserve:

- 1. Who were the earliest occupants of the
Ntabazinduna area?
.....

2. When was the Ntabazinduna Reserve established?
.....
3. Why was this Reserve formed?
.....
4. Why was this area called Ntabazinduna?
.....
5. List the chiefs of the Reserve in the years 1897 -
1939:
.....
6. What were the main duties of the Chief of the
Ntabazinduna Reserve during the Colonial period?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)
7. a) What parts of the Reserve were densely
populated in the 1920s?
.....
.....
b) Give the reasons for the distribution of
African population between 1919 and 1939:
.....
.....
8. a) What were the main economic activities of the
African people during the colonial days?
.....
.....

- b) What were the chief agricultural implements of the peasant producers in
 - (i) 1897 - 1926
 -
 - (ii) 1927 - 1939
 -
- c) What crops did these people grow?
 - (i) 1897 - 1926
 -
 - (ii) 1927 - 1939
 -
- d) Estimate the average yield of grain per acre in
 - (i) 1900 - 1925
 - (ii) 1927 - 1939
- e) State the reasons for low crop production:
 -
 -

- 9. a) What animals did the people rear?
-
- b) Why did they keep these animals in (a)?
 -
- c) What was the average number of cattle per family?
- d) What type of cattle did the Africans have?
 -

- e) What problems were faced by stock-breeders?
.....
.....
-

II The Ntabazinduna Reserve and the neighbouring Farms:

- a) Name all the farms that surrounded your Reserve:
.....
.....
- b) To whom did all these farms belong?
.....
- c) Who worked on these farms?
.....
- d) Where did these labourers come from?
.....
- e) State a few reasons why some inhabitants of the Reserve worked on the surrounding farms:
.....
- f) Explain when and why relations between the Reserve and the farms were harmonious:
.....
- g) Say when and why relations between the above communities were strained:
.....
-

III The Government Policy and the Ntabazinduna Reserve:

- a) Say when and why the Colonial Government was not interested in the economic affairs of the occupants of the Reserve:
.....
.....
 - b) State when and why the Government showed interest in the problems facing the Ntabazinduna Reserve:
.....
.....
-

IV Alvord and the Ntabazinduna Reserve:

- a) Did a white missionary called Emory Alvord visit this Reserve?
 - b) When did Alvord visit the Ntabazinduna area?
.....
 - c) Why did he come here?
.....
 - d) How many meetings did he hold per year?
 - e) How many peasant cultivators attended each of the meetings you have mentioned?.....
 - f) Account for poor or good attendance at these meetings?
.....
-

V **The Demonstrator and the Reserve:**

- a) Name the first African agricultural demonstrator to serve the people of the Ntabazinduna Reserve:
.....
- b) Where was he trained?
- c) Who was his father?
- d) Did people welcome this demonstrator?
- e) If yes or no, why?
-
- f) What agricultural methods did he introduce to the people?
.....
- g) Did he achieve his aims?
- h) Who was Mbuso's successor?
- i) What agricultural experiments were carried out by Mabhada in 1935 - 1939?
.....
.....

VI **Peasant farmers' responses to agents of change:**

- a) What new agricultural methods were adopted by the African peasant producers in 1927 - 1939?
.....
- b) Did the majority of these African producers accept or reject agricultural change in 1927 - 1939?
.....
- c) Explain why.
-
- Any other comments on this topic?
-

I would like to thank you for answering my questions. The information you have given me will shed light on the agricultural history of the Ntabazinduna Reserve before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Questionnaire prepared by: F Masuku

Interviewer : Fuller Masuku

Venue(s) : Ntabazinduna Reserve;
Bulawayo

The mother tongue of the interviewees and interviewer is Ndebele. Therefore the above questions were translated into Ndebele first. Informants answered these questions in Ndebele. I recorded the answers because some of the informants like MaMthethwa, N Nyathi could neither read nor write.

APPENDIX 2

TABLE III

Production, Exports, and Yields of European-grown Maize, 1900-65

<i>Year</i>	<i>Production</i> (203 lb bags)	<i>Exports</i> (200 lb bags)	<i>Yield</i> (bags per acre)
1899-1900	c. 17,000	n.a.	n.a.
1903-04	45,815	n.a.	n.a.
1906-07	c. 180,000	n.a.	n.a.
1908-09	n.a.	11,442	n.a.
1909-10	n.a.	19,555	n.a.
1910-11	393,166	23,378	n.a.
1911-12	n.a.	6,796	n.a.
1912-13	n.a.	38,963	n.a.
1913-14	634,133	202,105	3.93
1914-15	914,926	346,855	5.47
1915-16	680,285	51,259	3.88
1916-17	938,130	222,218	4.62
1917-18	591,722	214,257	3.08
1918-19	889,969	333,001	5.13
1919-20	1,120,548	488,665	6.45
1920-21	1,220,768	346,556	6.55
1921-22	662,636	32,556	3.64
1922-23	1,505,580	789,411	6.80
1923-24	1,080,084	313,585	4.66
1924-25	1,068,904	383,338	4.47
1925-26	1,393,654	434,592	5.81
1926-27	1,659,597	547,156	6.20
1927-28	1,268,100	597,834	4.29
1928-29	1,826,345	582,675	5.61
1929-30	1,917,252	745,010	6.04
1930-31	1,436,644	636,194	5.25
1931-32	1,882,856	1,136,140	7.44
1932-33	1,156,321	644,251	4.66
1933-34	1,728,065	333,603	7.01
1934-35	1,269,185	311,822	4.76
1935-36	1,985,848	934,086	7.45
1936-37	2,039,341	1,426,355	7.35
1937-38	1,432,003	396,336	5.18
1938-39	1,209,818	43,238	4.55
1939-40	1,625,292	387,550	6.49
1943-44	1,673,459	246,539	6.85
1946-47	885,030	3,370	3.51
1947-48	1,912,005	70	5.91
1954-55	2,734,920	nil	7.51
1956-57	3,777,000	2,520,000	10.20
1960-61	5,951,600	3,810,000	14.60
1964-65	5,201,000	50,000	12.00

Source: Palmer, R, Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia, p. 92.

CHART A.

Record of NATIVE FARMING DEMONSTRATION WORK.

Season
1927 - 8

Work of Demonstrators on Demonstration Plots.

File No.	Name of Demonstrator.	Reserve where located.	Number of plots worked.	Total acreage.	Plots stumped.	Plots winter ploughed.	Plots manured.	Plots late ploughed.	Plots cross-ploughed.	Average No. of cultivations.	Total yield in bags.	Yield in bags on best plot.	Average yield in bags per acre.	Average yield on Native Lands.	Average per cent of increase.
D.1.	Six Demonstrators in training	Chindamora	7	4			7	7	7	4	47	15.5	11.5	3	382
D.2.	Albert	Makoni	4	4	4	3	4	1	4	4	54.6	18.4	13.6	2	680
D.3.	Bernard	Chibuku	7	7	7	1	7	6	7	14	39	10.3	5.4	1.6	337
D.4.	Zanemwe	Chibi N.W.	10	11	9	6	8	4	4	2	26.4	6.6	2.6	.1	2600
D.5.	Makeche	Chibi N.W.	11	11	11	7	10	4	11	34	68.8	10.8	6.2	1	620
D.6.	Mapolisa	Selukwe	10	11	11	3	7	8	6	3	55.2	13.5	5.5	1.5	366
D.7.	M'buso	Mtabezinduna	7	9	7	2	7	5	6	2	26.4	6.6	3.7	.8	462
D.8.	Govu	Gwaai	4	4	4	4	2		4	1	19.2	9.3	4.8	.6	800
D.9.	Lintwa	Gwanda	11	11	11	3		9	11	2	20.7	4.5	1.9	.3	633
D.10.	Paulos	Chiweshe	8	8	9	7	6	1	8	3	43.9	9.6	5.5	2.6	211
D.11.	Govu	Samokwe	3	4	3	3	1	3	3	2	3.5	3.	.7	.1	700
D.12.	Philimon	Chikwakwa	6	6	6	3	4	6	6	2	35.4	9.2	5.8	228	210
Totals.	17 Demonstrators.	11 Reserves.	88	90	84	43	73	51	77	24	440.1	18.4	4.8	1.3	369

Source:
S138/72;
1927-1930.